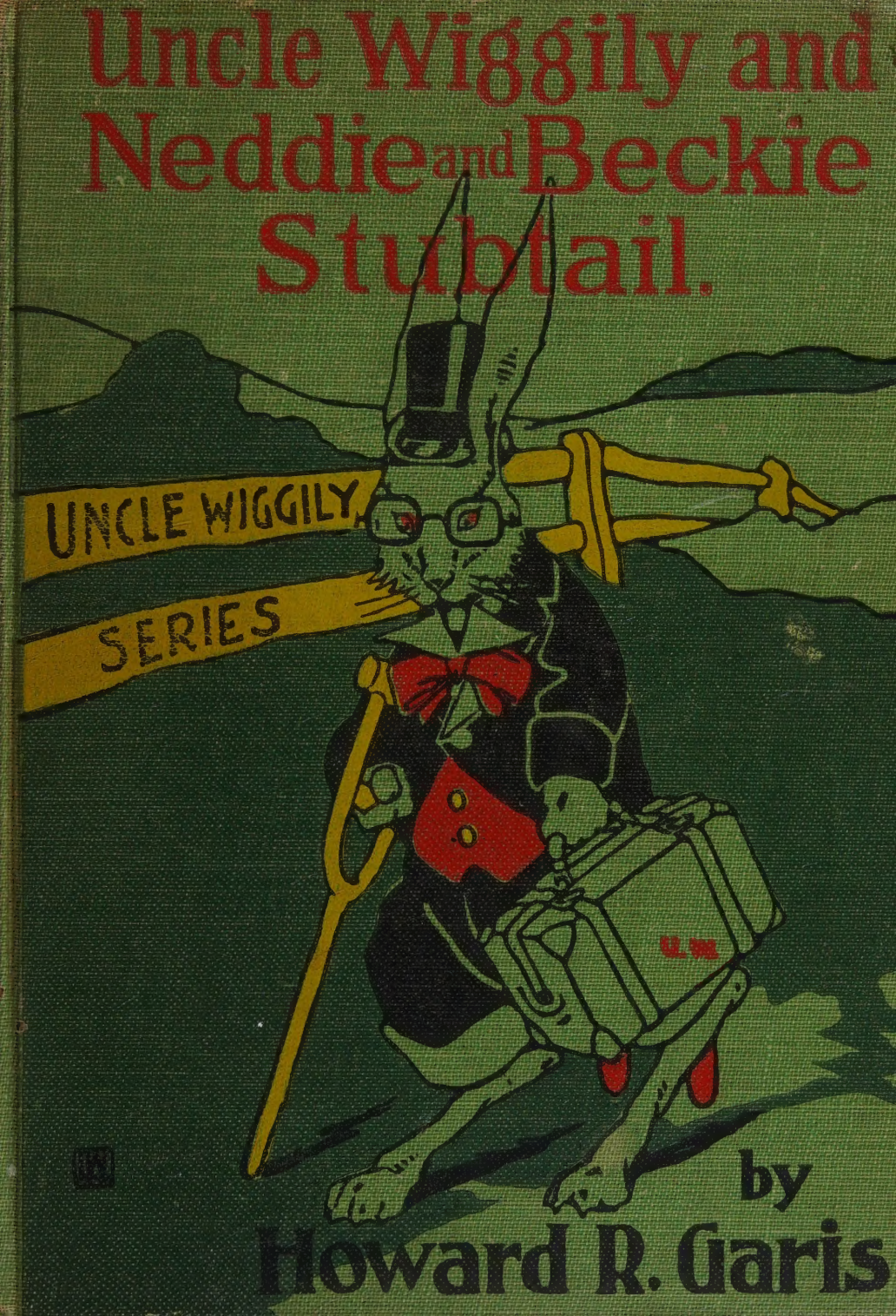
Uncle Wiggily and Neddie and Beckie Stubtail.



by Howard R. Garis

LOUIS WISA

BEDTIME STORIES

NEDDIE AND BECKIE STUBTAIL

(TWO NICE BEARS)

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

AUTHOR OF "SAMMIE AND SUSIE LITTLETAIL," "JOHNNIE AND BILLIE BUSHYTAIL," "CHARLIE AND ARABELLA CHICK," "THE SMITH BOYS," "THE ISLAND BOYS," ETC.

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Neddie and Becky Stubtail

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Neddie and Beckie Stubtail

STORY I

NEDDIE AND BECKIE IN TROUBLE

So many different kinds of stories as I have told you! My goodness me, sakes alive, and some molasses popcorn! I should think you would get tired of them.

But I hope you do not, and, as everyone likes something new once in a while, I thought I would make up some new stories for you. I have been telling you about rabbits and squirrels and ducks and chickens. How would you like to hear now about some little bear children? Not bad, savage bears, you know, but nice, kind, gentle, tame ones who always minded the papa and mamma bears, went to bed when they were told, and all that.

Of course, I could tell you some stories about bad, growly and scratchy bears if I wanted to, but I'd rather not, if it's all the same to you.

Now, then, for some bear stories.

Once upon a time, not so very many years ago, there lived in a house, called a cave, in the side of a hill, a family of bears. Their cave-house was not far from where Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dogs, had their kennel, and the bear cave was only a short distance away from where Joie and Tommie and Kittie Kat lived.

There were seven bears in the family, five grown-up ones and two children. There was a chap named Neddie, who was as nice a boy bear as you would want to meet. And there was a little girl bear named Beckie, and she was as cute as a soap bubble, if not cuter.

Then there were the papa and mamma bears. And their last name was Stubtail, for bears, you know, have only a little, short stubby tail—hardly a tail at all, to tell the truth. But still it is more of a tail than Buddy and Brighteyes, the guinea pig children, have.

Also living with this same Stubtail family of bears was an old gentleman bear named Uncle Wigwag, and the reason he was called that was because he was always playing tricks, or telling jokes, and when he laughed, after he had fooled anybody, he would wig and wag his head from side to side.

Also there was Aunt Piffy, who was so fat

that she used to puff and pant as she came upstairs, and lastly there was a real old bear gentleman named Mr. Whitewash. He was called that because he was all white—he was a polar bear from the North Pole, and he always wanted to sit on a cake of ice.

So these bears lived together in the cave in the side of the hill, and they did many things, about which I shall have the pleasure of telling you. Neddie and Beckie did the most things to tell about, but, of course, sometimes the other bear folks did things also.

One day when Neddie and Beckie had come home from their school, Mrs. Stubtail, the bear lady, said to her children:

"Neddie—Beckie, I wish you would walk a little way through the woods, and meet your papa when he comes home from his work in the bed factory." You see Mr. Stubtail worked at making mattresses for beds. With his long sharp claws he would make the inside of the mattresses all fluffy and soft so, no matter how wide awake you were, you always fell asleep when you stretched out on one of the beds the bear gentleman made.

"Why do you want us to meet papa?" asked Neddie.

"I want you to tell him to stop at the store

on his way home and bring some honey," said Mrs. Stubtail. "We are going to have hot corn-meal biscuits and honey for supper."

"Oh, joy!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws together. Then she waltzed around on her hind paws and she and Neddie hurried off down the road to meet their papa.

As they were going along they heard a voice calling to them:

"Oh, ho! Children, wait a minute! Here comes your Uncle Wiggily with some ice cream cones for you!"

"Oh, let's wait for our uncle, the rabbit gentleman," said Neddie.

So he and Beckie waited, and they heard a rustling in the bushes and their mouths were just getting ready for the ice cream cones when out popped Uncle Wigwag, the joking old bear.

"Ha! Ha!" he cried, laughing and wigging and wagging his head. "That's the time I fooled you!"

Neddie and Beckie were so disappointed that they did not know what to say. Uncle Wigwag was laughing at his joke, but when he saw how badly the bear children felt he said:

"Never mind. I'll give you each a penny and you can buy yourself some ice cream cones."

So he did, and then Beckie and Neddie were

happy, and they went on to meet their papa, while Uncle Wigwag looked around for some one else on whom he could play a joke.

"We ought to meet papa soon now," said Neddie, as he looked under an old stump to see if he could find any crabapples growing there.

"A little farther on and we'll see him," spoke Beckie.

They went on a little more, and all of a sudden Neddie saw a large hollow log lying on the ground. It was just like a stovepipe, only bigger and it had a hole all the way through it.

"Ha! I'm going to crawl through that hollow log!" cried Neddie.

"Better not," warned Beckie. "Maybe something in it might catch you."

"Pooh! I'm not afraid!" cried Neddie. "Anyhow, I can look all the way through. There's not a thing in it."

So he started to crawl through the hollow log, but my goodness me, sakes alive and some onion pancakes! Neddie had not gone very far before he found the hole in the log getting smaller.

"I don't believe I'll be able to crawl through to the other end," thought the little boy bear. Then he tried to back out, but he could not—he was stuck fast inside the hollow log.

"Oh, help! Help!" cried Neddie, wiggling

and trying to get out. But he was tightly held. He could hardly move.

"What's the matter?" asked Beckie from where she stood outside the hollow log.

"I'm stuck! I can't get out!" cried Neddie, and his voice sounded as if it were down cellar.

"Wait! I'll get a long stick and poke you out, just like you poke out a bean that gets stuck in your putty-blower," said Beckie. So she got a long stick, and poked it in through the hollow log. All at once the stick came up against something soft.

"What's that?" asked Beckie, surprised like.

"Stop! Ouch! It's me!" yelled Neddie. "Stop it! You're tickling my back."

"But I want to get you out," said Beckie, poking in the stick again.

"You can't do it that way," said her brother. "I guess you'll have to crawl in after me and pull me out."

"All right," said Beckie kindly, "I will." So she climbed through the log from the same end where her brother had gone in. "I'm coming," called Beckie. Then she grunted, all of a sudden.

"What's the matter?" asked Neddie, anxious like.

"I'm stuck, too," answered Beckie. "Either

I am too fat, or this log is too small. I can't move either way, and I can't help you."

"Oh, dear!" cried Neddie. So there the two little bear children were in trouble inside the hollow log. They wiggled and squirmed and did everything they could think of to get out, but it was of no use. They were stuck fast.

I don't know how long they might have had to stay, nor what might have happened to them, had not their papa come along just then from the bed factory. The bear gentleman heard cries coming from the hollow log, and, listening a moment, he knew they were made by his children, Beckie and Neddie.

"Ah ha!" cried Mr. Stubtail. "They are in the hollow log! I'll soon get them out."

Then, with his strong claws, Mr. Stubtail made a big hole in the side of the log, taking care not to scratch Beckie or Neddie. Soon the hole was large enough for the two bear children to come out about the middle of the side of the log. And, oh! how glad they were.

"I'll never go in a hollow log again!" cried Beckie.

"Nor I," added Neddie. Then they told their papa about their mamma wanting honey, and he took them by the paws and led them to the store where honey was sold and bought some. Next

they all went home to supper, and Uncle Wig-wag said it was a good joke on Beckie and Neddie to get stuck in the hollow log. Perhaps it was, but the bear children did not think so. But they liked the honey, anyhow.

So in the next story, if the jumping-jack doesn't fall off his stick down into the cake dish, and get all covered with frosting so he looks like a candy doll, I'll tell you about Beckie and the buns.

STORY II

BECKIE AND THE BUNS

THE next day, after Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the little bear children, had been caught in the hollow log, and their papa had to claw them out, they didn't go to school. It was not because they were not well enough, for, after all, being stuck inside a hollow log doesn't hurt a bear child very much. You see they have a lot of soft, fluffy fur on them.

No, that wasn't the reason Beckie and Neddie didn't go to school. And it wasn't because it was Saturday, either. No, it was because there was no school on account of the teacher bear having a toothache. And when a bear has the toothache he really can't do anything. He has to go to the dentist right away.

It was so with the teacher bear.

On the outside of the school house door the bear teacher hung a white piece of birch bark, on which was printed:

NO SCHOOL TO-DAY.
I'VE GOT THE TOOTHACHE.

"Oh, goodie!" cried Neddie when he read it, and he felt so happy that he tried to wag his little short tail, only he couldn't.

"Why, Neddie, I'm s'prised at you!" exclaimed Tommie Kat, who, with his brother and sister, Joie and Kittie, had also come to school.

"Oh, I'm not glad 'cause teacher's got the toothache," said Neddie Stubtail quickly, "it's just because there's no school."

"Oh, then so'm I glad," said Kittie Kat, purring softly.

So all the animal children went home on account of the school being closed, and when Mrs. Stubtail saw Beckie and Neddie coming up to the cave-house, she exclaimed:

"Why, what does this mean?" The little bears told their mamma, and Aunt Piffy, who had just come up from down cellar, said:

"Well, if there is no (puff) school, I can (puff) hear your (puff) lessons!" You see she puffed because she was all out of breath.

"Oh, no, thank you," said Neddie quickly, "we'll have to-day's lessons to-morrow, so we don't have to study any now."

Then he went out to have some fun: and one of the things he did was to watch his uncle Wigwag and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, building a new room onto the cave-house.

It was a room made from a big hollow log—not the same one that Neddie and Beckie had been caught in, however, but another one. Mrs. Stubtail wanted her cave-house made larger so Uncle Wigwag suggested adding on a hollow log for a sitting-room.

So that's what he and Mr. Whitewash were doing, and Neddie helped them by getting in their way every now and then, so they wouldn't work too fast and get all tired out. Finally Uncle Wigwag said:

"Neddie, I wish you'd go to the store and get me some red paint to color this log green." And, never thinking it was a joke, off Neddie ran.

Pretty soon after that his mamma wanted him to go to the store to get her a yeast cake, so she could make bread. But, as Neddie was not in sight, Beckie went.

On her way home with the yeast cake in her paws Beckie had to go past a house where some other bears lived. Now these bears were not nice and good. In fact they were bad, and because they were bad, and because the Stubtail family was a family of good bears the bad bears did not like them.

Why, would you believe it? Often those bad bears would take rabbit and squirrel and guinea

pig children off to their dens and keep them there for ever and ever so long, just to be mean, you know. But none of the Stubtails, or Mr. Whitewash, or Uncle Wigwag, or Aunt Piffy would do anything like that. Maybe Uncle Wigwag would play a joke, or do something funny, but nothing that was real mean.

And once Mr. Whitewash met a little boy kitten in the woods—Joie Kat I think it was. And Joie was wiggling and squirming and twisting this way and that.

"What's the matter, Joie?" asked Mr. Whitewash. "Have you the measles?"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Joie, "my back itches me terribly, and I can't reach the place to scratch it. Oh, dear!"

Now, there's nothing worse than to have an itchy place in your back and not be able to scratch it. Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, knew that, so with his claws he gently scratched Joie's back for him and tickled the little kitten boy very much.

But if Joie had met one of the bad bears, why, my goodness me, and some peanut butter on your cracker! The bad bear would, just as soon as not, have taken Joie off to his den and made him pull chestnuts out of the fire for the

other bears to eat. That's what it is to be a bad bear!

And that was the cave-house in the woods which Beckie had to go past on her way home from the store with the yeast cake. But she was not afraid, even of the bad bears.

However, one of the bad bears, looking out of a window in his cave-house, saw her coming and he said to his brothers:

"Ha! There's that goody-goody little Stub-tail girl! I'm going to get her in here and pull her hair!"

"How are you going to do it?" asked another bear.

"I'll show you!" spoke the first one.

So he went to the cupboard and got a lot of sweet buns. Bears, you know, love buns almost more than anything else. If ever you see some tame bears in a cage or in a park give them a few buns, and see how they enjoy them. That is, if the keeper lets you, not otherwise.

So this bad bear, who wanted to pull Beckie's hair, just because she was good, threw a bun out of his window. It fell close to the little bear girl, who looked at it in surprise.

"Ha!" she exclaimed, "that is strange! I wonder if it is raining buns from the sky?" She looked up, but she could see none falling

from the clouds, and because the bad bear who had thrown the bun was hiding behind the window curtains Beckie could not see him, either.

"Well, I'll eat it," the little animal said, and she did, for it was a good bun, even if a bad bear did throw it.

"Ha!" said one of the bad bears to his brother, "I don't see how you're going to get her in here to pull her hair just by tossing buns at her."

"You just watch," said the first bad bear.

Then he threw another bun, when Beckie wasn't looking, and this one he did not toss quite so far. It fell nearer to the cave-house of the bad bears.

"Oh joy!" cried Beckie, seeing the second bun, "someone is very good to me to-day!"

Ah! If she had only known.

"See!" exclaimed one bad bear to the other, "that's how I'm going to get Beckie in here! Every bun she picks up will bring her closer and closer to us, and soon I can jump out and grab her!"

Oh, wasn't he the bad old bear!

Well, Beckie ate the second bun, and then came a third one, sailing through the air.

"Why, it surely is raining buns!" cried

Beckie in delight. "I mustn't eat them all. I'll save some to take home to Neddie."

So she began to put the buns in her pocket, and she never noticed that each one she picked up brought her nearer and nearer and nearer to the cave of the bad bears.

The last bun was almost on their doorstep, and, just as Beckie reached over for it, the bad bear jumped out and grabbed her.

"Oh dear!" cried poor Beckie Stubtail.

But the bad bears did not get a chance to take her into their house. Just as they were going to do it along came Mr. Whitewash, the kind polar bear. He was looking for Neddie to tell him Uncle Wigwag was only joking about the red paint to make a log green. And then Mr. Whitewash saw the bad bear grab Beckie who had picked up the buns.

And what do you think Mr. Whitewash did?

Why, the big, brave white polar bear went right up to the bad black bear and he cuffed him on the ears with his broad paws, and pushed him back inside his own house, and then he tickled that furry creature in the ribs until the bad bear had to laugh whether he wanted to or not, and then Mr. Whitewash just grabbed Beckie up under his paw and hurried away home

with her. And, oh, how angry the bad bears were, because they could pull no one's hair.

"Beckie, you must be very careful about going near that bear house again," said her mamma when she heard the story.

"I will, but, anyhow, I got the buns," said Beckie, as she gave Neddie some.

So that's all now, if you please, but the next story will be about Neddie and the bees' nest—that is, if the nutmeg grater doesn't scratch the piano and make it cry when the rubber doll tries to play a song on it.

STORY III

NEDDIE AND THE BEES' NEST

One day, when Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the little boy and girl bears, started for school, Uncle Wigwag, the funny old bear gentleman who, with Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, was building a sitting-room on to the cave-house out of a hollow tree log, said:

"Neddie, when you come back from your lessons this afternoon I shall have something for you to do."

"All right," answered Neddie politely, as he stood up on his hind legs and reached for a bunch of grapes growing on a vine in the woods. "All right, Uncle Wigwag. Do you want me to go after some blue paint to color a board pink?" and Neddie laughed.

Uncle Wigwag laughed too, for you see he was always playing jokes on Neddie and Beckie, and he remembered when he had once sent the little bear boy for the wrong kind of paint.

"No," answered the old gentleman bear,

" nothing like that, Neddie; I just want to take you for a walk in the woods, and have you go see Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, with me. Uncle Wiggily is going to sell his automobile and buy a new car, so maybe he'll give us his old one."

" Oh, joy! I hope he does!" cried Neddie.

" So do I!" exclaimed Beckie.

Then she and her brother went to school and learned their lessons, such as how to make beds in hollow stumps, and how to scratch their letters on the white bark of a birch tree and how to keep out of dangerous traps, and all things like that.

And all the while Neddie was wondering whether or not Uncle Wiggily would give them his old automobile.

" If he does," thought the little bear boy, " we can have lots of fun. It will be better than sliding down hill or eating ice cream cones."

Well, after a while, school was out, and the blackboards could take a rest and the pieces of chalk could lie down on the back of the erasers and go to sleep. Out trooped the animal children.

" Come on, Neddie!" cried Joie Kat, the kitten boy. " Let's have a game of tag!"

" Or run a race!" added Tommie Kat.

"No, I've got to go home," said Neddie. "My uncle is going to take me with him."

So he did not stop to play, but hurried on. Beckie, however, played with Kittie Kat and with Susie Littletail, the rabbit girl, and Alice and Lulu Wibblewobble, the duck girls.

"Well, here I am, Uncle Wigwag!" at last called Neddie, as he ran up to the old bear gentleman. "Come on!"

"Just a minute, Neddie. Sit down on this board while I saw it in two, will you? I want it for the front steps," said Uncle Wigwag.

So Neddie, thinking nothing wrong, sat down on the board, which was placed between two stumps, resting on them. And no sooner had Neddie seated himself, than "Crack!" went the board, breaking right in the middle, and down Neddie went. But he wasn't hurt, for Uncle Wigwag, when he played this trick, had placed a pile of soft leaves for Neddie to fall on. They were just like a cushion.

"Excuse my joke!" laughed Uncle Wigwag. You see he had nearly sawed the board in two before Neddie arrived, and when the little bear boy sat on it the pieces were just held together by a few shreds of wood. Of course, they easily broke with Neddie's weight.

"Oh, that's all right! I don't mind!" laughed

Neddie, brushing the dried leaves off his fur. "You must have your joke, I suppose, Uncle Wigwag."

"Indeed I must," answered the old gentleman bear. "But here is a penny for you to buy a lollypop, because you took my trick so good-naturedly."

Then Uncle Wigwag, shaking his head, set off through the woods with Neddie to the house of Uncle Wiggily, the rabbit gentleman, to ask for the old auto.

"Hum! Let me see!" exclaimed Uncle Wiggily, when Uncle Wigwag had asked him. "My old auto, eh? Well, I will think about it. Sit down, Mr. Wigwag, and I'll consider it."

"And may I go off and buy a lollypop?" asked Neddie, hoping that, by the time he came back, Uncle Wiggily would have given Uncle Wigwag the old auto.

"Yes, toddle off!" exclaimed Uncle Wigwag, so Neddie toddled off.

On and on he went through the woods, and pretty soon he came to a tree on the side of which he saw something sticky. A number of flies were buzzing around it, and at first Neddie thought it was flypaper. But when he went closer he smelled something sweet, and putting the tip of his paw on it, and then putting his paw

to his mouth, Neddie found the sticky stuff on the tree was honey; just as you wet the tip of your finger when you want to see whether there is sugar or salt in the pepper dish.

"Ah, ha! Honey!" cried Neddie. "I just love honey! It is better than lollypops!"

He put his red tongue on the sticky stuff, and licked off all he could reach. Then he stretched up with his paws and got more. Finally he could reach up no farther.

But he looked up, and he saw a big black lump high in the tree, and Neddie said to himself:

"That must be where the most honey is. I'll climb up and get some, and take some home to mamma and Beckie."

Now, Neddie could climb a tree very well. All bears can, even little baby ones, for they have sharp claws for that very thing. So Neddie got ready to climb, and before doing so he sang this little song:

"Honey, honey in a tree,
Some for you and some for me.
Oh! how I do love sweet honey,
I can get this without money!"

Then Neddie began to climb. Higher and

higher he went in the tree, and as he went up he could smell the sweet honey more and more, and his mouth fairly watered for it.

Neddie did not stop to think that the honey was not his. All he thought of was how good it would taste, and how much he wanted it. Nor did he stop to ask himself what that funny buzzing sound was, that seemed to come from inside the tree.

"Oh, you honey!" gaily cried Neddie, as he climbed higher.

Finally he got to the big black lump, and, surely enough, it was a pile of honeycomb, the little holes being all filled with the sweet, sticky stuff.

"Oh, this beats lollypops!" cried Neddie. "It is better even than automobiles."

Neddie reached his paw into the middle of the black mass and scooped out a lot of honey. He put it in his mouth and began to chew on it. It was so good that he just had to shut his eyes.

"Oh, yum! yum!" cried Neddie.

Now, if he had had his eyes open Neddie might have seen a lot of bees flying out of the hollow honey tree. But he did not look. He was thinking too much of the sweet stuff. Out buzzed the bees, and they were very angry that some one had come to take their sweet stuff. And, small as

they were, the bees were not afraid of Neddie, who was quite a large bear boy.

"Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!" went the bees. "Get away from our honey!" Then they flew at Neddie, and with their sharp stings they stung him on the end of his soft and tender nose, and on the bottom parts of his paws, where they had no fur, and on his ears; and some of the bees even snuggled down in his fur and stung him through that.

"Oh, wow!" cried Neddie, as he felt the needle-like stings. Then he opened his eyes quickly enough.

"Get away from our honey!" buzzed the bees, and Neddie was glad to slide down that tree more quickly than he had climbed up it. Oh! how his nose smarted, and his paws! He seemed on fire all over. He licked the honey off his paws, but it did not taste good any more.

"Oh, wow! Double wow!" howled poor Neddie, and then he started to run home as fast as he could. And on the way he met Uncle Wigwag, who soon knew what the matter was.

"Some cool, wet mud on your nose will stop the pain," said the bear gentleman, and he took Neddie to a brook and made him a nice mud-plaster. Then Neddie felt better, but he said he would never go near a bees' honey nest again.

"And did Uncle Wiggily give you the auto?" asked Neddie of Uncle Wigwag on their way home.

"He is still thinking about it," said Uncle Wigwag. "Oh, but your nose is all swelled up like a football, Neddie." And so it was. But in a few days it was all better.

And in the story after this, if the horse radish doesn't run away with the spoonholder and scare the knives and forks off the sideboard, I'll tell you about Beckie and the grapes.

STORY IV

BECKIE AND THE GRAPES

THE nose of Neddie Stubtail, the little bear boy, was so badly swelled from the bee stings, after he took some of their honey, that he could not go to school next day, nor for some days after that. I told you in the story before this how Neddie got stung.

So Neddie's mamma let him stay home from school, but even at that he could not have much fun, for he could not go out and play, and what is the good of staying home from school if you have to remain in the house all the while?

There were two reasons for Neddie's staying in the cave-house, on the side of the green hill, and not going out. One reason was that most of the day all his boy animal friends were at their lessons in school.

The other reason was that when Neddie did go out with them, they all looked at his stung and swollen nose in such a funny way that it made him feel queer. He did not like it.

Sammie Littletail, the rabbit boy, would ask:

"What is the matter, Neddie? Did you bite yourself, or fall downstairs?"

And Johnnie and Billie Bushytail, the squirrel brothers, would say:

"Why, Neddie, did your Uncle Wigwag play a trick on you?"

Then Joie or Tommie Kat would want to know:

"Neddie, did you fall out of bed in your sleep, and bump your nose?"

"Neither one! Now you stop!" Neddie would exclaim, and then he'd go in the house. Oh, he was sorry in more ways than one that he had ever meddled with the bees' nest, even if he did get some honey out of it.

But one afternoon, when Neddie had come in the house because the other animal boys plagued him so, Mrs. Stubtail, the bear mamma, whispered to Beckie, who was Neddie's sister:

"Beckie, you know Neddie feels pretty badly, don't you?"

"Yes, mamma, I do. His nose must pain him very much."

"Indeed it does. Now I'd like to give him a little treat. Suppose you go to the store and get him some ice cream. That will cool off his nose and he will feel better."

"Of course I'll go, mamma!" exclaimed Beckie. So she put on her little red cloak and bonnet and off through the woods she went to where Jack Frost kept an ice cream store.

Beckie got a nice big box of ice cream for her brother, and on her way back through the woods the little bear girl saw some lovely bunches of wild grapes hanging on a vine. They were almost the last of the season and soon the grapes would be all gone, for the animals of the woods, and the birds of the air, would eat them.

"I'm going to pick some nice bunches, and take them home to Neddie," thought Beckie kindly. "Maybe he'll like them with his ice cream."

So Beckie set down the box of frozen sweet stuff, and began pulling off some bunches of wild grapes with her long claws, which were to her just what your fingers are to you.

Well, in a little while, not so very long, Beckie heard some one coming up behind her, sort of slow and careful like, and she quickly turned around. For she knew there were bad animals in the wood, who would be glad to carry her off to their dens. Beckie was a very sweet, fat little bear.

But all Beckie saw, when she turned around was Mr. Fuzzytail, the fox gentleman.

"Ah, Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Fuzzytail. "Good afternoon, Beckie! I hope I see you well. "Gathering grapes, I observe!"

"Yes," answered Beckie, wondering why Mr. Fuzzytail was so polite to her. Usually he hardly spoke, always going past as if he were in a great hurry. And when she saw Mr. Fuzzytail smiling in such a sly way, Beckie knew the fox gentleman had some reason for his politeness.

"Beautiful day; isn't it?" went on Mr. Fuzzytail, pretending to look at his paws, to see if there were any stickers on them.

"Yes," said Beckie. "Would you like some grapes?"

Beckie thought she would be just as polite as that fox was, and maybe she could find out what he was after.

"For he is after something," decided the little bear girl, "and it isn't grapes, either."

"Grapes? Why, yes, if you will be so kind and condescending as to stoop so low without bending, I would be thankful for a small bunch," spoke Mr. Fuzzytail, very, very politely indeed.

"Oh, he's surely up to some trick," thought Beckie. "I must find out what it is. He's as bad at tricks as our Uncle Wigwag."

Beckie was not afraid of the fox. She was larger and stronger than he was, even if she was

only a small bear girl. Of course, Kittie Kat, or Lulu or Alice Wibblewobble, the duck girls, would have feared Mr. Fuzzytail, but Beckie did not.

So she picked a nice bunch of grapes for him, and while he was slowly eating them, picking off the bad ones, Beckie looked all about. But she could see no danger. And, all the while, Mr. Fuzzytail kept talking to Beckie. He asked her all sorts of questions—how she was getting on at school, how her brother's stung nose was, what her papa worked at, and whether Aunt Piffy's epizootic was any better. Oh, that fox was a sly fellow!

And now I'll tell you why he was so polite, and why he stayed there talking to Beckie, and why he ate his grapes so slowly.

Do you remember the bad bears who lived in the woods? Yes. Well, do you remember how once they tried to get Beckie into their caves, by tossing buns to her, so they could pull her hair?

Oh, you do. Very good! Well, these same bears, or rather, one of them, was after Beckie again. He was the largest and the worst of the bad bears, too.

He had seen Beckie start off to the store, and he made up his mind he'd get her. Only he knew that if he followed along she might hear him

tramping over the sticks, for he was a very heavy bear. And he knew that if he started to run after Beckie he could not catch her, for she was light on her paws and swift to run.

So the bad bear planned a trick. He met Mr. Fuzzytail, the fox, and said to him:

"Now you creep along after Beckie. She won't be afraid of you, and if you can keep her there by the grape vine for a while, by talking to her, it will give me a chance to sneak up behind the bushes and grab her before she knows what is happening. Will you do it?"

"I will," said Mr. Fuzzytail, for he was afraid of the big bad bear. So that's how it was the fox kept on talking to Beckie as she picked the grapes. He wanted to keep her attention so she would not notice the bear sneaking up on her.

Finally Beckie said:

"Well, I must be going now. Good-by, Mr. Fuzzytail."

"Oh, good-by," said the sly fox, and out of the corner of his eye he saw the bad bear behind the grape vine. The bear had sneaked up without Beckie hearing him, because she was so busy in being polite to the fox. "Good-by, Beckie," went on Mr. Fuzzytail. And then to himself he said: "I guess you won't go very far."

Well, Beckie leaned over to pick up the box of

ice cream that she had bought for Neddie and just then, with a loud roar, out from behind the grape vine sprang the bad bear:

"Ha! This is the time I have you!" he cried to Beckie.

Beckie jumped so that the box of ice cream slipped out of her paw and fell to the ground. The paper box hit a sharp stone, burst open and out ran the ice cream all over, for it had melted when Beckie stopped to pick the grapes.

"Wow!" cried the bad bear, as he made a jump for Beckie.

But he never reached her. Beckie leaped back just in time, and the bear came down with his paws in the puddle of the slippery ice cream.

"Bang!" he went. His feet slid out from under him, just as if he were coasting down hill backward, and he got so tangled up with himself that by the time he was untangled Beckie had run away and gotten safely home. Oh, how she ran! No bad bear could catch her.

The bad creature who had gone to all this trouble to catch Beckie got up out of the ice cream. He was a funny looking sight, all splattered up and plastered with dried leaves.

"This was all your fault!" he cried to the fox. "Be off before I bite you!" And the sly fox was glad enough to go.

So that's how Beckie got away from the bear by means of the slippery ice cream. She told her mamma what had happened, and Mrs. Stubtail sent Uncle Wigwag to the store for more ice cream for Neddie. So the little bear, who was stung by the bees, had some, after all, and everybody was happy except the bad bear.

And in the following story, if the chocolate drop doesn't fall out of the window and get all squashed flat on the postman's umbrella, I'll tell you about Neddie and the trained bear.

STORY V

NEDDIE AND THE TRAINED BEAR

"COME on out and have some fun!" called Tommie Kat, the little kitten boy, to Neddie Stubtail, the little bear chap, one afternoon when all the animal children had come home from school. "Come on out, Neddie!"

Neddie had just entered the cave-house, where he lived with his mamma and papa and the rest of the bear folk. Neddie tossed his books into one corner, his hat into another and then he called out:

"Oh, I'm hungry, I want something to eat!"

"Never mind about eating," said Tommie Kat, "come on have some fun."

"No, I must eat!" cried Neddie, and he rushed out toward the kitchen.

Well, as it happened, just then Aunt Piffy, the fat lady bear who lived with Mrs. Stubtail, being her sister, in fact; Aunt Piffy, as it happened, just then, was coming in from the kitchen with a large plate of doughnuts she had just baked.

And, of course, Neddie, being in such a hurry, ran right into Aunt Piffy, doughnuts, plate and all, and then——

Oh dear! Such a time as there was!

Aunt Piffy suddenly sat down, and it is a mercy she didn't sit on Neddie, for if she had there would have been quite a sad happening, as Aunt Piffy was very large and stout. And the plate fell from her paws, and broke into twelve pieces, or maybe thirteen, for all I know, and the doughnuts rolled all over the floor, one even bumping down the cellar stairs.

"Oh, dear! What happened?" gasped Aunt Piffy, and she could hardly breathe, she was so excited.

"I—I guess I happened," said Neddie, looking all around at the scattered doughnuts. "But I—I didn't mean to," he added. "I'll help pick up the cakes."

"First, if you please, help me up," said Aunt Piffy, puffing and blowing to get her breath.

"I'll help you!" exclaimed Tommie Kat, for he had heard, from out on the porch of Neddie's cave-house, the noise of the fall and had come in see what had caused it.

So Tommie and Neddie helped Aunt Piffy get up on her hind paws, and then Neddie began gathering up the spilled cakes.

"May I help at that, too?" asked Tommie, and Aunt Piffy answered:

"I should be glad to have you. And you may have a doughnut, Tommie."

"How about me?" asked Neddie, thinking perhaps he did not deserve one for having been in such a hurry as to make his Aunt Piffy tumble down.

"Oh, well; yes, I guess you may have one also," said the bear lady. By this time she had her breath again and soon Neddie and Tommie had picked up the doughnuts. They each kept one and ate them as they went out to play.

But they had not been out long before Mrs. Stubtail called to her little bear boy:

"Neddie, come right in here and pick up your things! You have scattered your books all over, and your school cap is on the floor."

"Oh, ma, I don't want to!" exclaimed Neddie; but his mamma made him, because it is not good for boys to be careless and scatter things all over the room.

Then Neddie could play, and he and Tommie had lots of fun. They frisked about in the woods, for it was cold and jumping about made them warm. Then Tommie said:

"Oh, let's go over and see Uncle Wiggily, the rabbit gentleman."

"All right, we will," spoke Neddie. "And I'll ask him if he has yet made up his mind about giving his old automobile to Uncle Wigwag."

So the kitten boy and the little bear chap went over to the hollow stump where the old gentleman rabbit lived, but he was not at home, having gone for a ride with Grandfather Goosey Gander, the duck gentleman.

"Well, let's take a walk in the woods and see if an adventure will happen to us," suggested Tommie.

"All right," agreed Neddie, and off they went. They had not gone far before they met Dickie Chip Chip, the sparrow boy, flying through the air, and Dickie said:

"Oh, Tommie Kat, your mamma is looking all over for you. She wants you to go to the store."

"Then I'd better go home," said Tommie, and off he ran with his tail up in the air like a fishing pole. That left Neddie all alone, for Dickie Chip Chip could not stay to play with him.

"Never mind," thought Neddie, "I'll look for an adventure by myself."

He went on and on, and pretty soon he came to a big hole in the ground. He was looking down in it, thinking perhaps some new bear might live there, when, all of a sudden, up from the hole

was poked a long nose, and then Neddie saw a big mouth, filled with shining white teeth, and a voice cried:

"Ah, ha! Now I have you!" And the first thing Neddie knew the skillery-scalery alligator, with the humps on his tail, had grabbed him by the back of his neck.

"Oh, let me go! Let me go!" cried Neddie.

"No, I'll not!" said the alligator, speaking in a thick voice, like cold potatoes, for you see he had hold of Neddie by his teeth, and he could not talk very well, that alligator couldn't.

Neddie wiggled this way and that and tried to get loose. It did not hurt him very much, for there was thick fur on the back of his neck, and the alligator's teeth did not go through. It was just like when the mamma cat carries her little kittens, you know, in her mouth by the backs of their necks. Only you must not carry the kittens that way unless papa or mamma shows you how, for you might choke them. And I know you wouldn't do that for the world.

Anyhow, there the alligator had hold of Neddie by the loose skin at the back of the little boy bear's neck, and the skillery-scalery creature was trying to drag Neddie down into the hole in the ground.

"Let me go! Let me go!" begged Neddie.

"Nope! Nope!" said the 'gator, pulling harder than ever.

Neddie braced with his claws in the dirt, but, in spite of this, he was being dragged along, for the alligator was bigger and stronger than the bear boy.

Neddie was almost down in the hole and he was wishing he had not gone off alone to look for an adventure, when right behind him, he heard a large bear growling. At first he hoped it was his papa or Uncle Wigwag, the joking bear, or even Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, who had come to save him. But when he looked he saw it was a strange man-bear.

However, that strange man-bear was very kind to Neddie. Rushing up to the alligator, the big bear just tickled him on his thick and scaly hide with his sharp claws, and that 'gator was so tickled, and he had to laugh so hard, that he let Neddie go.

"Quick now!" cried the big bear, "jump out of the way, little bear boy!"

And you may be sure Neddie got out of the hole and the skillery-scalery alligator, still laughing at being tickled, went and hid in the woods and did not come out for a day and a half.

Then Neddie looked at the bear gentleman who had saved him. This bear was very nice and

kind-looking, only he had an iron ring in his nose, and fastened to the ring was a long chain.

"What is that for?" asked Neddie, after he had gotten over being frightened.

"That is so I will not get lost," said the other. "You see I am a tame bear, and do tricks, and my master has this ring in my nose, and leads me around by it so I will not go away. And he feeds me buns and popcorn. Oh, it's nice to be a trained bear!"

"A trained bear, eh?" said Neddie. "Are you like a train of cars that I got for Christmas?"

"No, I am trained to do tricks," said the tame bear. "See, I will show you," and he stood on his head and turned a somersault, and then waltzed around in a circle. "Would you not like to learn to do those things?" he asked Neddie.

"Maybe," said the little bear boy, who was not quite sure.

"Then come with me," invited the tame bear.

But just then there was a rustling in the bushes and out came a real man with a long pole and a brass horn. And he took hold of the tame bear's nose chain and looked at Neddie, the man did. And as Neddie had been taught to be always afraid of men, the bear boy ran home through the

woods as fast as he could, and told all that had happened to him.

"It was a narrow escape for you," said his papa. Then supper was ready and Neddie and Beckie, his sister, ate as much as was good for them, and not a bit more, I do assure you.

And in the next story, if the raisins in the rice pudding don't all hop out and leave it as full of holes as a Swiss cheese sandwich, I'll tell you about the little Stubtails running away.

STORY VI

THE STUBTAILS RUN AWAY

"WHAT are you thinking of, Neddie?" asked Beckie Stubtail, the little bear girl, one Saturday morning when there was no school and when she and her brother were out in front of the cave-house brushing up the dried leaves to make a bonfire.

"Oh, I'm not thinking of much," said Neddie, with a look through the woods to see if he could see his Uncle Wigwag trying to play any tricks on him.

"Oh, but you must be thinking of something," insisted Beckie. "For I have had to speak to you twice before you answered, and when mamma asked if you didn't want to scrape out the frosting dish when she was making a cake, you said: 'I would if I didn't have to have a ring in my nose.' What in the world did you mean, Neddie?"

"Hush!" exclaimed the little bear boy, looking all around. "Not so loud. Some one may hear you!"

"Well, what if they do?" asked Beckie in surprise. "I only said what you said about having a ring in your nose——"

"Hush, that's it!" exclaimed Neddie. "You know——"

"I know you said the tame trained bear had one," went on Beckie, "but what has that got to do with you!"

"Hush!" exclaimed Neddie, coming nearer and taking hold of Beckie's paw, "that's it, Beckie. How would you like to become a trained bear and do tricks, Beckie?"

"Like it? Why, I wouldn't like it at all!" exclaimed the little bear girl. "I think it would be perfectly horrid to have a ring in your nose."

"Well, maybe we wouldn't have to," went on her brother. "That's what I've been thinking of."

"Why, Neddie Stubtail!" exclaimed Beckie. "I'm going straight and tell mamma! The very idonical idea!"

"No, don't do that!" cried Neddie, grabbing his sister by the paw before she could run into the cave-house. "Wait and I'll tell you about it."

"Oh, I know," spoke Beckie, and tears came into her eyes. "You're thinking of running away and becoming a trained bear! Oh, don't do it!"

"Why not?" asked Neddie. "I think it would be fun. You know the day the skillery-scalery alligator had me by the neck, the good tame bear came along and tickled the 'gator so that he had to let me go."

"Yes," said Beckie. "I remember that, but I don't see why——"

"Listen!" went on Neddie, just as the nice telephone girl says it, "listen and I'll tell you all about it."

So Beckie listened as hard as she could.

"The trained tame bear said he could do lots of tricks," went on Neddie, "and he did some for me. And he also said the man gave him buns and popcorn and lots of good things to eat."

"Oh, but papa has always taught us to be afraid of real men," said Beckie.

"Yes, maybe real men, with guns and dogs. But this man only had a stick, like mamma's clothes pole, and a brass trumpet. And as I ran away through the woods I could hear him blowing a lovely tune on it. I'm sure he was a good man."

"Well, maybe," admitted Beckie. "But are you going to run away and become a tame trained bear?"

"I'm thinking of it," answered Neddie. "And maybe you would like to come, too. Just imagine

—sweet buns every day—and popcorn balls, no lessons—and doing tricks, and having that man play on the brass horn for you——"

Now it wasn't right of Neddie to do this, and try to make Beckie come away with him. It was bad enough for the little boy bear to think of going off by himself. But when he wanted his sister to come, too—well, it wasn't right; that's all. Neddie was older than Beckie and he should have known better. But that's the way it is sometimes, even with boys in real life. Of course I don't mean any of you, but there are some other children I could name if I wanted to. But I'm not going to.

Well, anyhow, Neddie talked of how nice it would be for him and Beckie to run away, and become trained bears, and do tricks, and have good things to eat and finally Beckie said:

"Well, I'll run away for a little while with you."

"Yes, we'll just try it. If we don't like it we can run back again," spoke Neddie.

"Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys, once ran away," said Beckie, "and they were glad enough to run home again."

"I know, but this is different," said Neddie; "they went to join a circus. We'll just go with

a kind man. There will be all the difference in the world."

"All right, we'll try it," said Beckie, and she sighed a little at the idea of leaving her mamma and papa and Uncle Wigwag, and Aunt Piffy and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, and her nice cave-house, and all that.

"Could I take any of my dolls with me?" asked Beckie, after a bit.

"Well, maybe one," said Neddie, "though I never heard of anybody that ran away taking a doll. But maybe one won't do any harm."

"Then I'm going to take Maryann Pudding-stick Clothespin, my very nicest doll," said Beckie.

"All right," agreed her brother. "Now we must get ready. And, mind you, it's a secret. No one must know anything about it."

"Can't I tell—tell mamma?" asked Beckie, tears coming in her eyes.

"No, not even mamma."

"Then I'm not going!"

"Oh, that's just like you girls!" cried Neddie. "We fellows get everything going nicely and you won't play fair. You can leave a note for mamma, after we're gone, telling that you've run away, if you like."

"Then I'll do it," said Beckie.

"And you must pack up what clothes you'll need," went on Neddie. "Put 'em in a paper bag, and I'll do the same. Then when it gets dark we'll go out and run away to find the man with the brass horn."

"And when will we get some sweet buns and popcorn?" asked Beckie, anxious-like.

"Oh, as soon as we find him," said Neddie. "Now I'm going to get ready. Mind! Not a word to anybody."

So the two bear children prepared to run away. Of course I'm not saying they did right—I guess you wouldn't say so yourself, but I have to tell this story exactly as it happened, or it wouldn't be fair. Of course I might make a mistake, but I'll do as nearly right as I know how.

Neddie and Beckie packed up a few of their clothes in paper bags they found in the kitchen. Beckie also took some things for her doll, Maryann Puddingstick Clothespin. The doll herself the little bear girl wrapped in an old salt bag that had been washed clean.

"I wonder what those two children are up to anyhow?" asked Aunt Piffy, the fat bear lady as she helped Mrs. Stubtail do the washing.

"Oh, maybe they're planning some trick to play on Uncle Wigwag, to pay him back for all

the joking he has done," said Mrs. Stubtail. "I guess they're all right."

But if she had only known what Neddie and Beckie were going to do. Oh dear! Isn't it too bad mothers don't always know? They could save so much trouble!

But there! I must tell about the story.

Beckie and Neddie had their supper, and they had hidden their bags of things out under the front porch. They were not very hungry. They were too excited; and then, too, they were thinking of what the bear-man might give them. Perhaps they were also a little sad about leaving their nice home. But Neddie had made up his mind to run away.

Finally the bear children went off to bed. But they did not sleep, and when the house was all dark and still they quietly got up and went out the back door. Silently they went to where they had left their bundles and got them.

"Come on!" whispered Neddie. "At last we're running away!"

"And—and—maybe we'll be glad to—run back again!" whispered Beckie, and her voice choked.

"Oh, don't be a cry-baby!" said Neddie. "Come on!"

"Oh, but it's dark!" objected Beckie.

"The moon will soon be up," said her brother.

On and on through the woods they went, and soon the moon did come up. Then it was lighter. On and on went the two bear children; when, all of a sudden, they heard a noise in the bushes.

"What's that?" asked Beckie, sliding close up to her brother.

"I—I don't know," he whispered. And just then, through the woods, they heard a sound like this:

"Ta-ra! Ta-ra-ta! Ta-ra-ta! Ta-ra-ta! Toot! Toot!"

"Come on!" cried Neddie, joyfully. "There is the trained bear man. Now we are all right," and holding tightly to Beckie's paw he raced on through the woods toward the bugle sound.

And what happened next, and what Neddie and Beckie did when they found the trained bear and his master, I'll tell you on the next page, when the story will be about Neddie and Beckie up a pole—that is I will if the letter-carrier doesn't put a clothes-pin on our little doggie's tail and mail him away off where he can't go to the moving picture show in our cellar.

STORY VII.

NEDDIE AND BECKIE CLIMB A POLE

When Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the two little bear children, had run away from home, as I told you in the story before this one, and had come to the woods where they heard the horn blowing, they did not know just what to do.

"That," said Beckie, as she held her doll, Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin, tightly in her arms, "that surely must be the kind man who has the trained bear with the ring in his nose. Now we are safe and we will get many good things to eat, Neddie."

"We had better take a peep before we run out from behind this bush," said Neddie, slow and careful like. "Perhaps it is some other man with a horn, trying to fool us."

You know the bear children had met in the woods, one day, a nice, kind trained bear, and with him was a man called the Professor, who led the bear around by a rope, fast to a ring in the bear's nose. And the trained bear did tricks, such as turning somersaults and standing

on his head, while the man collected, in his hat, pennies that people tossed to him.

The trained bear invited Neddie to travel around with him, promising that he would have popcorn and other good things to eat, but at first Neddie was afraid of the man with the brass horn.

So he ran home; but the more Neddie thought of it the more he wanted to run away and become a traveling trained bear. So he got his sister Beckie to go with him, and away they ran in the evening, leaving their home and their papa and mamma; and Aunt Piffy, the fat bear lady, and Uncle Wigwag, and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, and all their friends. Then they came to the woods and heard the brass trumpet blowing, as I have told you.

"Can you see anything?" asked Beckie, as she looked over her brother's head, while he was peering through the holes in a bramble bush.

"Not yet," answered Neddie. Just then there came another blast on the brass trumpet, and Neddie cried:

"Oh, yes! There he is!" And then Beckie saw the tame bear with the ring in his nose, instead of in an ear where some ladies wear theirs, and with the tame bear was the man with the long pole.

"Now, George," the man was saying, "I guess we'll go to sleep, and in the morning we'll do some more tricks and get more pennies. Whoop-la! There's your supper, George!"

"I guess it's time for us to run out now," said Neddie to his sister, when he heard the word supper.

"Yes," said Beckie, "I guess it is." You see it was really after supper time, and Beckie and Neddie had eaten theirs before they ran away from home. But running away makes you hungry, whether you've had supper or not, I suppose.

Out ran the two bear children, and Beckie especially was very glad they had found the tame bear, for it was getting real late, and, though the moon was shining brightly, still she wanted company.

"Hello, what's this!" cried the man with the pole, as he saw Neddie and Beckie running toward him. "More bears! Are they going to bite me?"

"Oh, no!" quickly answered the trained bear, "I know who they are. One of them is a friend of mine whom I met in the woods the other day. I invited him to come with me, and I see he has brought his sister. Perhaps you would like to train them to do tricks."

"Ha! I think I would," said the man. "They might do tricks very nicely with you. I'll have a regular bear family," and he pulled some pieces of dried bread out of a bag on his arm, and, taking some himself, he gave the rest to the trained bear.

"If you please," said Neddie, making a polite bow, so low that his little tail almost pointed to the sky. "If you please, did we hear you mention supper?"

"You did," answered the man. "It is supper time for me and George—rather late, it is true, but still supper time. My bear's name is George," he added. "Eat your supper, George."

"I am eating it," said the trained bear, speaking in his own language, which the man understood, and spoke also. Not many men can speak bear language, but this one could because his head was all bare. He was a bald-headed man, and they can mostly always speak a bear language.

"But what about something to eat for us?" asked Beckie.

"Yes," added Neddie, "we're hungry, and you know, George," he said, speaking to the trained bear, "you said something about popcorn and cake and lollypops—"

"I know I did," answered the trained bear, sort of confused like and puzzled, as he ate his dried bread. "But I didn't mean I had popcorn every day."

"I should say not!" exclaimed the man, whose name was Professor. "The idea! I'd soon be in the poorhouse if I gave George popcorn every day. That's only for Thanksgiving, or Christmas, or the like. But you are welcome to some dried bread."

Then he gave Neddie and Beckie some bread from the bag, and the two bear children had to take it. They did not like it very much, but it was the best they could get, and they were hungry.

"Running away isn't as nice as staying home," whispered Beckie to her brother, after she had put her doll to sleep under some dried leaves.

"Oh, well, it will be nice to-morrow," spoke Neddie. "And, anyhow, it will be Thanksgiving in a couple of days, and then we'll have plenty of good things to eat."

"I wonder where we will sleep?" went on Beckie. "I don't see any nice cave-house, such as we have at home."

"I should say not!" cried Neddie. "You don't live in a house after you've run away. The idea! We'll live out of doors, and we won't

have to wash our faces and paws when we don't want to."

"I never mind doing that, anyhow," said Beckie, who was a very clean little bear.

Well, Neddie and Beckie finished their dried bread, and they wished they had some buns, or maybe even some ice cream, for all I know, and then the man said:

"Well, it is not so very late, and there is a nice moon, so I think I will see if you little new bears can do any tricks. Come now, climb that pole!" and he pointed to a telegraph pole growing in the woods.

"Oh, we can't climb that," said Neddie, quickly.

"Why not?" asked the man with the bald head. "You must climb it if you are to be trick-trained bears."

"Why, the pole is too smooth and slippery," said Beckie. "It has no branches sticking out to take hold of, as a tree has."

"Pooh! That's nothing. George can climb the pole," said his master. "Show 'em how, George."

"All right, Professor," said George, free and easy like, and up the pole he went, like a jumping-jack on a string.

Then Neddie tried it, but he slipped back, and

so did Beckie. They had not yet learned how to stick their claws in the smooth telegraph pole, and hold on.

"I'm afraid you'll never be trick bears," said the Professor. "I must teach you to climb a pole. We'll try it again to-morrow."

But Neddie and Beckie did not wait until next day. All of a sudden, out from under a bush, came the biggest skillery-scalery alligater the bear children had ever seen. Right for Beckie and Neddie the 'gator came, and Neddie cried:

"Come on, Beckie! Up the pole we go and then he can't get us!"

"Let me go first! Let me go first!" cried Beckie, and Neddie did, most politely. And, before they knew it, those two bear children had climbed the smooth telegraph pole they never though they could scale, and the 'gator could not get them.

What do you think of that?

Then George and the Professor drove the bad alligator away, not being the least bit afraid of him or his tail either, for that matter, and the man called:

"You may come down now, Beckie and Neddie. At last you have learned to climb a pole, though it did take the alligator to make you. You will never forget it. Come down,

and go to sleep, and in the morning we will travel on."

So Beckie and Neddie came down the pole, and curled up in the soft warm leaves to sleep, glad enough that they had on thick fur coats, for the weather was very cold. And soon they were safe in by-low land.

And now, if the church steeple doesn't reach up and tickle the clouds so that they giggle and let a lot of rain fall on my umbrella, I'll tell you next about Neddie doing a trick.

STORY VIII

NEDDIE DOES A TRICK

NEDDIE and Beckie Stubtail, the little children bears, did not sleep very well the first night they ran away from home to become trained animals. There were several reasons for this.

In the first place they had to sleep out of doors, and not in their own nice cave-house. And then, too, their papa and mamma were not with them.

"It—it's lonesome," whispered Beckie, waking up in the dark and putting out her paw to touch her brother. "Oh, Neddie, I wish I'd stayed home!"

"Hush! Go to sleep!" advised Neddie, kindly. "You'll wake up George, the trained bear, and the Professor man if you talk."

"Are they asleep?" whispered Beckie, feeling down in the leaves to see if her doll, Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin, was all right.

"Sure they're asleep," answered Neddie. "Hear 'em snore?"

And, truly enough, you could hear that bear George snore as real as anything, honestly you could. What? You didn't know bears snored? Well, did you ever sleep near one? I guess not! So, you see, you can't tell. But I can.

"And it will soon be morning," went on Neddie, "and then, maybe, we'll travel on and on, and not have any lessons to do, and we may get buns and popcorn."

"Yes, the trained bear did mention about buns," said Beckie, and then, thinking of sweet buns and crackers she did manage to go to sleep.

But, oh! she did miss her mamma, and Aunt Piffy, the old bear lady, who was so fat. And more than once Neddie wished he might wake up and see Uncle Wigwag, even if the old bear gentleman did play a trick on him. And as for Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear, Neddie would have given a whole penny to see him again for even a second.

Still, he had run away of his own free will, Neddie had, and he must make the best of it.

"Besides, I like it!" he said to himself. "I'm going to learn to be a trained bear, and, when Beckie and I get a lot of money we'll go back home and make mamma and papa rich."

Neddie thought it would be very easy to do this. In fact, he was a very kind little bear and

had not meant to do wrong when he asked Beckie to run away with him.

But now let us see what happened.

Morning came at last. The sun rose from behind the hills, where it had slept all night, and made a bright light through the trees, from which all the leaves now had fallen.

"Well, children, did you sleep well?" asked George, the trained bear, as he wet his big paws in a spring of water and washed his face.

"Pretty well, thank you," answered Neddie, politely.

"Do you think we will get some buns and popcorn to-day, George?" asked Beckie, anxiously.

"We might," said the trained bear. "I'm sorry I made you think we trained bears had that sort of food every day. But if we don't get it to-day I'm sure we will on Thursday, which will be Thanksgiving. And, anyhow, to-day we'll travel on, and you'll see me do my tricks, and you'll hear the Professor blow his bugle and sing, and you'll see the people standing around to look at me and wonder. And, who knows? perhaps you may do some tricks yourselves."

"We can climb a telegraph pole, anyhow," said Beckie, a bit proudly. "Even if it did take an alligator to scare us into doing it."

"Well, we'll have breakfast and travel on," said the Professor, after a bit. Then he reached in the bag again and pulled out some more dried bread.

"Only that!" whispered Neddie, and he thought of what a nice meal the folks at home were having—huckleberry pancakes, maybe, with maple sugar on, and hot buns and milk sweetened with honey.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Beckie, but she was a brave little bear girl and made up her mind not to find fault, especially after having run away when she didn't really have to. So Beckie washed the face of her rubber doll, Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin, and made believe give her some breakfast.

Then Beckie and Neddie ate their dried bread, and so did George, the trained bear, and the Professor ate some too. Then the Professor played a lively tune on his bugle:

"Ta-ra! Ta-ra-ta! Ta-ra-ta! Ta-ra-ta! Ta! Ta!" he blew.

It was quite nice and jolly and made all the bears feel better.

"Here we go!" cried the Professor. "Forward—march! Here we go!"

He tossed the long pole to George, who shouldered it just like a gun, and marched on

with his head high in the air, while Beckie and Neddie laughed at him, he was so funny.

"Oh, I guess we'll like this after all," said Neddie.

"Maybe," spoke Beckie, as she hugged her rubber doll.

But every one was very sad back in the cave-house where the Stubtail children lived. As soon as morning had come Aunt Piffy, going in to call Neddie and Beckie, saw that they were not in their beds.

"They're gone!" cried the nice, fat old lady bear.

"They're up to some trick," said Uncle Wig-wag, who, always playing tricks himself, thought that other bears would do the same thing.

"We must find them," said Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear.

But although they looked all over they could not find Neddie and Beckie, of course, for the children were with the Professor and the trained bear, far, far away. You knew that, didn't you?

Oh! how badly papa and mamma Stubtail felt, and they called a nice dog policeman to help find Neddie and Beckie. But I'll tell you about that part later. This story is about Neddie's trick.

After breakfast, as I said, the Professor,

George, the trained bear, and Neddie and Beckie went on and on through the woods.

"Soon we will come to a village," said the Professor. "There George will do some of his tricks, and you little bears can climb a telegraph pole, or maybe the church steeple. Then the people will laugh and clap their hands and give us things to eat."

"Buns and popcorn balls?" asked Beckie, anxiously.

"Yes, I think so," said the Professor.

Soon they did come to a village, and the Professor blew some sweet notes on his bugle. At once a lot of children came running out to watch the bears, and when they saw Neddie and Beckie the children said:

"Oh, aren't they cute!"

One little girl even touched Beckie's fur, and Beckie liked to feel the tiny hand. Beckie and Neddie were getting so they were not afraid of real folks. Then George, the trained bear, did some of his tricks, turning somersaults, playing soldier and the like.

"Now you little bears will do a trick," said the Professor. "Come, Neddie, climb a pole!" And he blew on the bugle.

Neddie looked for a pole to climb, but just then he saw a fat woman, almost as fat as Aunt

Piffy, coming down the street. The fat woman had a basket of eggs on her arm, and the eggs were very heavy.

"Oh, I must help her!" said Neddie, politely, for his mamma had always taught him to be polite to ladies, whether they were fat or not.

So Neddie waltzed over to take the basket of eggs so that he might help the woman. She saw the bear coming and, not knowing Neddie was kind and tame and trained, she screamed and ran. Neddie ran after her, and just as he put his paw on the handle of the basket of eggs he slipped on a banana peeling, and so did the fat lady. Down they both went, ker-thump, and the basket of eggs fell also—and——

Well, you can imagine what happened! Neddie and the fat woman were just covered with the whites and yellows of eggs—all stuck up like—and everybody laughed like anything. Really they could not help it.

"Oh, what a fine trick!" cried the boys and girls, clapping their hands.

"Yes, but it is too expensive a trick to do every day," said the Professor. "I shall have to pay for those eggs, I guess." And the fat woman made him pay almost a dollar, and nobody gave Neddie or Beckie any buns, or popcorn balls, either.

"Well, we'll travel on," said the Professor. "We may get some ice cream in the next place." So on they went after Neddie had washed off the sticky eggs from his fur in a brook of water.

And next, if the rubber plant doesn't stretch itself out and take all the lumps of sugar from the salt cellar, I'll tell you about the Stubtails' Thankgiving.

STORY IX.

THE STUBTAILS' THANKSGIVING

"MAMMA! Mamma!" called little Beckie Stubtail, the bear girl, as she awoke in the morning. "Oh, mamma, is breakfast ready?"

"Hush!" exclaimed Neddie, the little boy bear, as he reached over with his paw and patted his sister Beckie. "Mamma isn't here, Beckie."

"Oh, that's so; she isn't," and Beckie sat up in her bed of leaves under a tree out in the open air. Neddie was sleeping next to her, and on the other side was George, the tame trained bear, and Professor, the man who made George do tricks, and who blew tunes on a brass horn.

"Oh, dear!" cried Beckie. "I thought, for a minute, just for a minute, Neddie, you know, that we were back home again with mamma, and papa and Aunt Piffy and Uncle Wigwag and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, and all our friends. But we're not; are we?"

"No," answered Neddie, stretching out in the dried leaves, so that they rustled like corn husks.

"We're not home, Beckie. We ran away, you know, to become trained bears, and earn money the way Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys, did when they joined the circus."

"Only they didn't," said Beckie, looking to see if her rubber doll, Maryann Puddingstick Clothespin, was still asleep.

"They didn't what?" asked Neddie.

"They didn't earn any money. And maybe we won't."

"Oh, yes, we will," said Neddie. "You see we know how to do the trick of climbing the telegraph pole, and I can take a basket of eggs, and fall down, and break almost every one."

"Yes," laughed Beckie, "but that's a trick the Professor doesn't want you to do. Eggs cost too much!" and she laughed again, as she thought of the fat lady whose basket of eggs Neddie had tried to carry, when he slipped on a banana skin and went down ker-thump! as I told you in another story.

"Well, anyhow, we'll learn some real tricks, and soon we'll get money," spoke Neddie. He and his sister, you know, had run away from their house in the nice cave to join George, the tame bear, with a ring in his nose, and the Professor who made George do tricks.

"I wonder what we'll have for breakfast to-

day?" asked Beckie, as she saw George, the big bear, stretching himself.

"I hope it's something good," spoke Neddie, as he saw the Professor getting up. "I'm tired of dried bread; and that's all we've had so far."

"Yes; we haven't had any of the nice buns and the popcorn balls that George told us about that day he met us in the woods," went on Beckie.

"Come to breakfast, Beckie and Neddie," called the Professor, for he could speak and understand bear language. And he took some dried bread out of his bag.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Beckie.

"Dear, oh!" cried Neddie.

"Never mind," said the Professor, "to-morrow will be Thanksgiving and I'm sure something will happen between now and then so that we shall all have a fine dinner. We will start off soon, and see if we can find our fortunes as Uncle Wiggily, the rabbit gentleman, did his. Come on!"

So the little bear children, and George, the trained bear, and the Professor ate their breakfast of dried bread, and drank some water from a spring. And then they traveled on again.

Sometimes they would come to a little village, or town, and there the Professor would blow his

brass horn. All the boys and girls, and some of the older people, would gather about in a circle. Then George, the big bear, would do his tricks, marching like a soldier, turning somersaults, waltzing, climbing a tree or making believe wrestle with the Professor.

"And the little bears can do tricks, too," said the Professor to the people. "Come, Beckie—Neddie, climb a pole for the audience!"

Then the little Stubtail bears would stick their claws into a smooth telegraph pole, and up they would go to the very tip-top.

Then you should have heard the children laugh and shout, and clap their hands. The big people would put pennies in the hat of the Professor, and some of the children would run in their houses and get slices of bread, or maybe an apple or something else good to eat to give to the bears. For George, the big follow, as well as Beckie and Neddie were kind, gentle and tame bears, you know. They would hurt no one.

But when it came night they had gotten nothing like a Thanksgiving dinner, nor did they have any invitation to eat one with friends, either.

"I—I wish we were home," said Beckie, and some tears came into her eyes. The tears didn't quite fall out, but almost.

"Well, wait until to-morrow," suggested

Neddie. "Something may happen then, and it isn't Thanksgiving until to-morrow, you know."

Well, the next day came. It was Thanksgiving, and still there was no sign of a fine, big dinner for the bears or the Professor. They had slept that night in the woods, the Professor cuddling up close to big George to keep warm in the bear's thick fur. And though they had some cookies and cakes and apples to eat, it was far from being what Beckie or Neddie would have had, had they not run away from their cave-house.

"We'll travel on," said the Professor, "and see what happens."

Well, they had not gone very far, before all of a sudden they saw a man running through the woods. And right after him came a big lion, roaring as loudly as he could roar. And the lion was switching his tail from side to side, and every now and then, reaching out his claws to grab the man.

"Oh, save me! Save me!" cried the man.

"Bur-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r!" roared the lion.

"Oh, can't you help the poor man?" asked Beckie, of George, the big bear.

"I'll try," said George. Then he ran after the lion, and with the long pole which the Pro-

fessor let George carry as a soldier-gun. George tripped up the roaring lion beast. Just then the Professor blew a loud blast on his brass horn, and Beckie and Neddie threw a lot of oak tree acorns at the lion. All this frightened the lion very much, especially when he felt the acorns hitting him. He thought they were bullets, and he thought the noise of the brass horn meant that a lot of soldiers were coming after him.

So away ran the lion through the woods, and the man was safe. Oh, how thankful he was!

"You saved my life," he said to the Professor, and to Neddie and Beckie and George. "What can I do for you? where are you going?"

"We are looking for a Thankgiving dinner," said the Professor, "but we have not found it yet."

"Ha! Say no more!" cried the man, quickly. "Come with me! I will give you the best Thanksgiving dinner you ever ate!"

"Who are you?" asked Beckie.

"I am a circus man," answered the one the lion had chased. "But we do not give shows in winter. I have all my animals in a big barn, not far away. This morning that lion would not bring in a pail of milk when I asked him to, and to punish him I said he could have no dinner. So he chased me, and I don't know what he would

have done had he caught me. But you saved me, the lion has run away, and I suppose a policeman monkey will catch him. But you—come to my animal barn and you may have the dinner I was going to give the lion, as well as all you can eat besides. Come on!"

"Oh, at last we are to have a Thanksgiving dinner!" cried Neddie. "Oh, joy!" And Beckie clapped her paws.

Then the Professor and Beckie and Neddie and George, the big bear, followed the circus man. He led them to a big barn in the woods. And, oh! all the animals that were there—elephants and tigers and good lions, and zebras and more bears and lots of monkeys, and giraffes with necks so long that they could pick an orange off a church steeple, and cunning little ponies, and a hippopotamus with a mouth like a red flannel bag—and hundreds of others.

"Welcome to our Thanksgiving dinner!" all the animals cried to Beckie and Neddie when they saw the Stubtail children. "Eat all you want!"

And such a dinner as it was! From cranberry sauce to popcorn balls and honey cakes and blueberry pie and chestnuts and cider—and, oh, dear! I mustn't write any more about it or I'll get the indigspepsia. Anyhow it was a grand dinner,

and in the middle of it who should come back but the bad lion who had chased the circus man.

"I'm—I'm sorry I was bad," roared the lion. "May I have a piece of pie?" Then the circus man forgave him, and the lion had a good dinner. And Beckie and Neddie stayed in the circus barn all night, feeling quite happy.

And I hope you have a good dinner on Thanksgiving—each and every one of you. But don't eat too much. Then on the page after this, if the fishman doesn't blow his horn in the phonograph and scare the player-piano, I'll tell you about Neddie and the elephant.

STORY X

NEDDIE AND THE ELEPHANT

It was the day after Thanksgiving. Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the two little bear children, awoke in the barn where the circus man kept all his animals during winter, when he was not giving a show in the big tent. Neddie and Beckie felt very nice and comfortable, for they had had a good holiday dinner when they had almost given up expecting one; they had a nice warm place to sleep, and they were happier than at any time since they had run away from home to join George, the big trained bear, and the Professor, his master, who led George around by a chain fast to a ring in his nose.

"Are you there, Neddie?" called Beckie from her bed in the nice clean sawdust. She was hugging her doll Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin.

"Of course I'm here," answered Neddie, blinking both his eyes, and wiggling his little short tail. "Aren't you glad you ran away now

with me, sister, so you can become a trained bear?"

"Yes—I guess so," answered Beckie. "Still, I'd like to see my mamma, and nice fat Aunt Piffy, just once."

"Oh, we'll go back home pretty soon," said Neddie. "When we have earned some money. Then papa and mamma will forgive us for running away."

"I hope so," went on Beckie. "And I hope that Uncle Wigwag won't play any jokes on us."

"Oh, he's sure to do that, but we mustn't mind," said Neddie, as he hopped up and shook the sawdust out of his ears.

George, the tame bear who did tricks, was already up, and he was waltzing around to where a lot of monkey ladies were getting breakfast for the circus animals. Then the Professor, who led George around by the nose when the bear did tricks, stretched out and yawned and said to the circus man:

"It was very kind of you to let us stay here all night."

"Pray do not mention it," said the circus man politely. "I hope you rested well."

"Yes, but I did not get to sleep very early," said the bear Professor. "I think perhaps I ate

too much mince pie, with strawberry ice cream on it."

"And I didn't sleep very good, either," went on Beckie. "But it was because the elephant snored so that I was afraid he would shake the roof down on our heads."

"Oh, you musn't mind that," said the circus man with a laugh. "Nosey, that's the elephant's name, you see, really never does any harm. He's as gentle as a kitten and as playful as a frog."

"Well, I wouldn't like him to jump on me," said Neddie with a laugh. "He's a good bit larger than Bully, the frog, who lives near the beaver pond back home."

Then breakfast was ready, and the monkey ladies waited on the tables at which the circus animals sat down. And, in order that they would not step on their own tails, the monkey ladies tied them around their necks in a double bow. This made them look nice, and also kept them from catching cold in their ears.

Neddie and Beckie Stubtail had a good breakfast and they were thinking of staying with the circus man, instead of going off looking for adventures with George, the Professor, when the circus man called:

"All ready now! First class in somersaults!"

"Why, he sounds just like our school

teacher!" exclaimed Neddie. "I didn't think we'd have school when we left our home."

"This isn't regular school," explained the circus man, "but my animals have to study their lessons, just the same. How do you think an elephant could waltz and play a hand organ, to say nothing of standing on a tub and wagging his tail, if he did not have lessons and practise them? Of course we have to have a sort of school."

"And I think I'll send Neddie and Beckie to it," said the Professor. "They could learn tricks then much better than I could teach them, and George and I would have more time to collect pennies and buns and popcorn balls."

"Would you like to go to school to me, and learn tricks?" asked the circus man of the bear children, and they said they would.

"Very well, then," said the circus man. "As soon as I have taught my new elephant how to stand on his head I'll begin, and give you a lesson."

Then the new elephant, who, as yet, knew hardly any tricks, had to get out in the middle of the sawdust ring and learn to stand on his head. It was not easy, either. One of the older elephants had to show the new elephant a number of times before he could do it even a little bit.

But finally he could, and the circus man said:

"Now stay standing on your head for ten minutes, Frisko. It will be good practice for you. Don't get down! Stay right as you are. Now then, second class in fast running!" and the circus man took a lot of ponies over to one side of the barn to have them practice for the races.

And all the while, Frisko, the new elephant, had to stand on his head. The Professor took George, the bear, off to one side of the circus barn to teach his pet a new trick, and as Beckie had to wash and dress her rubber doll, Neddie was left with nothing to do. So he walked over and watched the new elephant learning the trick of standing on his head.

"Do you like it?" asked Neddie, the bear boy, of the elephant.

"Oh, yes, I don't mind," said the big creature. "Oh, dear!" he suddenly cried. "Oh, me! Oh, my!" and a big tear, about as large as a cup of water, came in each of the elephant's eyes.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Neddie kindly.

"Oh, my back itches me something terrible!" said Frisko, the elephant, "and I daren't get down from standing on my head to scratch it. Oh, dear!"

Now, if there is one thing worse than another

it is to have an itchy place where you can't scratch it. Neddie knew this as well as anybody. It's as bad as wanting to sneeze when some one scares you out of it, and really that's the very worst thing that can happen.

"Oh, my!" went on the elephant, and he wiggled about, and tried to scratch the itchy place on his back, but he couldn't, and he didn't dare get down from standing on his head, for fear the circus man would be angry at him, and oh! such a lot of trouble as he had.

But Neddie thought of a plan.

"How would you like to have me scratch your back for you Frisko?" asked the little bear boy. "I won't dig my claws in very deep. Shall I scratch you?"

"If you only would," sighed the elephant. So Neddie gently scratched the big creature who was standing on his head. "Ah, that is lovely. I feel so much better now," said the elephant. "I can stand this way as long as I have to."

But he did not have to stand on his head much longer, for the circus man came over pretty soon and said to Frisko:

"That will do. You recited your lesson very nicely. Now you may go to the kitchen and get a lump of sugar."

And the elephant did—a large lump, for he had a large mouth, you know.

"Now, Neddie Stubtail, I think I'll see what sort of lesson tricks I'll give you to study," went on the circus man. "First, let me see you climb up this pole."

There was a big round pole, like a telegraph one, sticking up in the middle of the circus barn floor.

"Oh, I can't do that!" said Neddie. But then he remembered how he and Beckie had once gone up the telegraph pole the time the skillery-scalery alligator was after them. Up and up went Neddie, sticking his claws into the soft wood. Beckie, watching her brother, felt very proud of him, and so did George, the tame trained bear.

Neddie was almost at the top, when, all of a sudden, the pole began to tip over and over and over.

"Oh, it's falling!" cried Beckie. "Neddie, look out! You'll be hurt!"

No one knew what to do. There was great excitement. The lions roared and the tigers snarled. Then Frisko, the elephant, who had practiced standing on his head, and whose back Neddie had so kindly scratched, came rushing up, swallowing the last of his lump of sugar, and this elephant cried:

"Make way for me. I am strong. I can hold up that pole until you make it fast so it will not fall. I'll save Neddie."

And the elephant did. In his strong trunk he held the pole up straight until other elephants nailed it to make it firm and steady. Then Neddie could come safely down. The elephant had saved him. So you see you should always scratch an elephant's back when you can.

And now about the next story. Let me see. I think, in case the feathers in the lady's hat do not tickle the milk pitcher so that it falls off the table and spills all the cream, I'll tell you about Beckie and the monkey.

STORY XI

BECKIE AND THE MONKEY

MANY things happened to Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the little bear boy and girl, while they stayed with the circus man in the barn where they had their Thanksgiving dinner. Oh many, many things happened, but I have only room to tell you of a few of them.

The two little bears cubs had been in the circus barn about a week, and though they liked it very much, and, though George, the tame trained bear, and his master, the Professor, and the other man, and the elephant and the lions and tigers were all very kind to Neddie and Beckie, they began to wish they were home.

"I—I'm sort of sorry we ran away," said Beckie one morning, as she put a new dress on her rubber doll, Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin. It was only her own pocket handkerchief that Beckie used for a doll's dress, but it did very well for all that.

"I guess I'm a bit sorry, too," said Neddie.

"We have learned some tricks, to be sure, and I can turn a somersault almost as good as George can, but still it isn't as much fun as I though it would be."

"I guess running away never is," said Beckie.

"But we have had some fun," went on Neddie.

"Do you mean the time you did the trick of climbing the pole here in the barn, and it toppled over with you and the elephant had to hold it up?" asked Beckie. "Was that fun?"

"I was too scared to think it was funny, but it might have been jolly for the others," laughed Neddie.

Then the two little bear children, who had run away from their home in the cave-house on the side of the hill, walked around the circus barn. They listened to the lions having their roaring lessons, in which the seals, who juggled rubber balls on the ends of their noses, also joined. Then Neddie and Beckie looked at the tall giraffes take a lesson in picking oranges off the top rafters of the barn, and at the hippopotamus, who had to have his sore throat looked at by Dr. Possum, who always attended the sick circus animals.

"My! You have a very sore throat," said Dr. Possum to the hippopotamus when he had looked at it. The hippo opened his mouth so wide that

Dr. Possum could get right inside, which he did, sitting on the hippo's tongue in order to see better. "Yes, a very sore throat," went on Dr. Possum. "You must gargle it."

So he gave the hippo some medicine, and the hippo gargled his throat and really he made such a funny noise, like thunder, doing it that Beckie and Neddie had to laugh. And that made the hippo sneeze so that he could not gargle.

"When are we going out traveling around again?" asked Neddie of the Professor and George. "Are we always going to stay here with the circus animals?"

"No, indeed," answered the Professor as he blew a nice tune on his brass horn. "But it is getting too cold for traveling now, and sleeping out in the woods. Besides, all the children are saving up their pennies for Christmas, and they will not drop any in my cap when I go around after George has done his tricks.

"So I think we will stay with the kind circus man and his pets for some time—at least until it gets warmer. Meanwhile, Neddie, I want to show you a new trick that you can do with George. I'll have you ride on his shoulders, carrying a broom, and I think that will make the people laugh, and when people laugh they give you more pennies than otherwise."

"Oh, goodie! I'm going to learn another trick!" cried Neddie in delight. Then the Professor took the little bear boy off to one side of the barn, near the place where the elephants slept in the hay, and, with the big, kind, tame bear, George, they practiced the new trick, the Professor blowing a tooting-toot-toot-tune on his brass horn every once in a while.

This left Beckie to play by herself, but she was not lonesome, for she had her rubber doll to take care of, and she could watch the hippo gargle his big red-flannel throat, and she looked at the monkeys doing tricks in their cages.

Beckie was not very lonesome. But perhaps if she and Neddie could have seen what was going on back in their cave-house by the hill, they would have run to their papa and mamma as fast as their legs would take them, for Mr. and Mrs. Stubtail were very lonesome for their children. So was Aunt Piffy, the fat bear lady, and also Uncle Wigwag and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear.

"If my children do not soon come home to me," said Mrs. Stubtail, wiping her eyes on her apron, "I don't know what I shall do."

"I know," said Mr. Whitewash, "Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, and I will start off and find them. If Uncle Wiggily

could find his fortune he can find lost children."

"That is a good idea," said Papa Stubtail. "If Neddie and Beckie do not soon come back I'll get Uncle Wiggily after them."

And, all this while, mind you, Neddie and Beckie were in the circus barn.

Well, after Beckie had given her rubber doll a nice wash in the parrot's bathtub, the little bear girl heard some one crying. At first she thought it might be some bad animal, pretending to be in trouble, so as to catch something for his supper. Then Beckie remembered that she was safe in the circus barn, where all the animals were her friends.

So she looked around, and there she saw a great big grandfather monkey crying, and holding his face in his paw. He was all hunched up and stooped over as if he hadn't a friend in the world, and he looked very sorrowful.

"Oh, what is the matter?" asked Beckie, kindly.

"I have a terrible toothache," said the monkey gentleman.

"Oh, that's too bad!" exclaimed Beckie. She knew what a toothache was, once having had one herself. "Why don't you do something for it?" she asked.

"I don't know what to do," said the grandfather monkey. "That is, unless I have it pulled, and I don't want to do that."

"I don't blame you," said Beckie, "still it might be better to have it out."

"If they could just pull out the ache, and leave the tooth in, I would not mind it so much," went on the monkey. "But when they pull the tooth just to get out the ache—that is too much! Oh, dear!" and he almost stood up on the end of his tail, the pain was so bad.

Beckie glanced about the circus barn. No one seemed to be looking after the toothache monkey. All the other monkeys were practicing on their hand organs, and all the other animals were reciting their different lessons. Beckie and the old Grandfather monkey were all by themselves.

"I know what I'll do," said the little bear girl. "I'll just slip out and go to Dr. Possum's and get some toothache medicine for you. That may stop your pain."

"Oh, will you?" cried the grandpa monkey, "That will be very kind of you."

So Beckie left her rubber doll asleep, and slipped out of the circus barn when no one was looking. She hurried to Dr. Possum's office and got some very strong medicine. Then, when she

went back, she put some on some cotton and then she put the cotton in the hole of the monkey's tooth, and soon it was all better.

Then, as Beckie had nothing else to do, she though she would go to sleep with her doll, which she did, lying down in the soft, clean sawdust. Beckie slept and slept, and so she did not see the bad old skillery-scalery alligator slip in through the barn door which she had left open when she came in with the toothache medicine.

Nearer and nearer came the 'gator to Beckie. She did not see him, neither did Neddie nor the circus man, nor the Professor nor George, the big bear, or they might have driven him away.

"Ah, ha! Now I'll get her!" whispered the alligator to himself. "She is asleep and can't see me. I'll just carry her off to my den, and then—Ah, we shall see what will happen then!"

But Beckie was not to be carried off by the 'gator. All of a sudden the grandpa monkey, whose toothache was all better now, saw the skillery-scalery creature.

"Wake up, Beckie! Wake up!" cried the good monkey. "Get out of the way, and I'll attend to that alligator."

Beckie awakened, and rolled out of the way just in time, or the alligator might have grabbed her. Then the monkey took four pawfuls of

sawdust and threw it in the eyes of the alligator and down his throat and into his mouth and nose and ears, making the 'gator sneeze forty-'leven times. And whenever a 'gator sneezes that way he can't harm anybody.

That's what happened to this skillery-scalery alligator, and away he went, taking his humpy-bumpy tail with him. So Beckie was saved, which shows that you should always stop a monkey's toothache when you can.

Then the bear children and the circus animals had their supper, and there was pickled ice cream for those who wanted it. And, in the next story, if the baby doesn't sit down in the peach basket so tightly that we have to take the poker to get her out, I'll tell you about Neddie and Beckie going back home.

STORY XII.

NEDDIE AND BECKIE GO HOME

"Oh, Neddie!" exclaimed Beckie Stubtail, the little girl bear, as she rolled over in the clean shavings on the floor of the barn where the circus animals stayed during the cold winter months.

"Oh, Neddie, I've just thought of the nicest game we can play! Oh, it's just too lovely for anything!"

"Pooh! A girl's game!" answered Neddie, the boy bear, as he looked under a pile of sawdust to see if he could find popcorn ball, or maybe an ice cream cone. Mind, I'm not saying for sure, but maybe. Anyhow, Neddie found nothing good to eat, so it doesn't make any difference.

"I don't want to play any girls' games," went on Neddie.

I don't call Neddie very polite, myself, but then you may think differently. Beckie looked sort of disappointed, and her paws, in which she was holding Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin, her rubber doll, trembled a little, and Beckie

thought sure she was going to have to use her pocket "hankerwitch" (which is just the same of your handkerchief) to wipe away her tears.

For Beckie was lonesome, and she wanted her mamma, and the little girl bear wished she hadn't run away from home with her brother to go with the Professor and George, the big, tame, trained bear with the ring in his nose. Yes, indeed, Beckie was sorry she had run away.

I guess Neddie was sorry, too, for, after pawing about a bit in the sawdust, he looked at his sister, and when he saw her lips quivering, and that she was trying to reach for her hankerwitch without him seeing it—then Neddie did what he should have done at first, and said:

"Oh, well, Beckie, maybe a girl's game would be nice after all. We aren't doing much here. Tell me about it."

"I will," said Beckie, and she brightened up and smiled as well as little girl bears can smile, and she patted her little rubber doll, and said:

"Now, Neddie, just as soon as Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin is asleep I'll tell you about the trick I thought up all by myself."

So Neddie waited until the rubber doll should close her eyes, and go fast, fast to sleep. It took some time.

"Well, isn't that doll asleep yet?" asked

Neddie after a bit. He was anxious to know what trick Beckie was going to tell about.

"Hush! Yes, she's asleep," said the little bear girl. "Come on, we'll go over near where the elephants are eating their peanuts and I'll tell you all about it. Will you kindly watch over Mary Ann Puddingstick Clothespin?" asked Beckie of the big hippopotamus.

"I will," answered the river-horse, yawning until it looked as if some one had opened a big red flannel bag, so large was the hippo's mouth.

"Now for my trick," said Beckie when she and her little brother were over on the side of the circus barn where the elephants lived. "I was thinking, Neddie, that if we could get a long plank, or board, we could put it over the back of one of the big elephants. Then you could get on one end of the board and I'd get on the other, and we would see-saw and teeter-tauter up and down, and the people who watched us would like the trick very much."

"Yes, I think that would be fine!" cried Neddie. "Why, that isn't a girl's trick at all! It's good enough for any of the boys! We'll do it, and maybe we'll get a lot of sweet buns and some lollypops, too! Why, that's as good a trick as some that George does!"

And George was a pretty good trick bear, too,

let me tell you. When the Professor blew on his brass horn, Ta-ra-ta-ra-ta-ra! George would somersault, or peppersault, and march like a soldier and do all things like that.

Well, Neddie and Beckie found a long teetery-tautery plank in the barn, and then they asked the kind old elephant, who had once helped Neddie, if he would let them put it on his back for a see-saw.

"Why, to be sure I will," kindly said the elephant, and with his long rubbery, stretchy trunk he put the plank on his own back, for it was quite too heavy for Neddie and Beckie to lift so high.

"But I wonder how we are to get up on the plank now?" asked the little girl bear.

"You can climb up my neck, if you don't scratch me too much," said the spotted giraffe, who was as tall as a stepladder. So Neddie climbed up the neck of one giraffe, on one side of the elephant, and Beckie climbed up another giraffe on the other side, the bear children taking care not to scratch the tall, spotted creatures. Then the little bear cubs got on the plank over the elephant's back both at the same time, balancing themselves nicely, and then they began to teeter-tauter! Up and down they went, while Beckie sang this song.

" Teeter-tauter
Bread and water.
Up and down we go.
Sometimes I am very high
Then again I'm low."

Well, the bear cubs were having a fine time, when along came the circus man and the Professor, who owned George, the trained bear. The two men, who could speak and understand bear, and all other animal languages, watched Neddie and Beckie doing the teeter-tauter trick Beckie had thought up all by herself.

" That's pretty good," said the circus man, speaking bear talk, and nodding toward the two little bears.

" Yes, indeed," said the Professor. Then the two of them talked for some time in their own language, which Beckie and Neddie could not understand very well.

Beckie and Neddie felt very proud that the circus man and the Professor should like their trick. But a little later, when the poll-parrot came over to them, and told them something, they did not feel so happy. The poll-parrot said:

" Oh, you don't know what I heard! I heard those two men talking about you two little bears

I can understand man talk, and talk it myself, you see."

"What did they say?" asked Neddie, sliding down off the teeter-tauter. That let Beckie come down suddenly with a bump, but she fell on a pile of soft shavings, so she did not get hurt in the least.

"What did they say?" asked the parrot. "Why I heard them say that they were going to dress you two bears up like clowns, and make you go down South where it's warm weather even if it's winter up here. Down there the Professor is going to take you and George and an elephant, and make you do that see-saw trick. Oh, you're going to be taken away from here!"

Beckie and Neddie looked at each other. They had never thought such a thing would happen when they did their little trick.

"Oh, dear!" cried Beckie as she thought of going farther and farther away from her home and her mamma. "I wish we'd never run away, Neddie!"

"So do I!" exclaimed Neddie. "But I'll not let them send us down South! Listen, Beckie, we must run away again, only this time we'll run back home!"

"Oh, goodie!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws.

"Come on—right away!" said Neddie. "We'll go before the Professor and the circus man see us!"

So the two little bear children slipped out of the back door of the barn. They wished they could kiss George, the big, kind bear, good-by, but it was impossible—which means you can't do it.

Oh! how fast Neddie and Beckie ran. Over the fields and through the woods they went, until the circus barn was left far, far behind. And finally, just as night was coming on, the two little children bears reached the cave in the side of the hill where they lived, and they were safe home again, and oh! how glad their papa and mamma and Aunt Piffy, the fat bear lady, were to see them. And of course Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear, and Uncle Wigwag, the trick-playing bear, were glad also. And oh! such a good supper as Neddie and Beckie had.

"We're never going to run away again!" they said.

So that's all to this story, but in the next one, if the dog barking at the moon in our backyard doesn't take off his collar and tie it on my pussy cat's neck, I'll tell you about Neddie Stubtail and little Wuzzy Fuzzytail.

STORY XIII

NEDDIE AND WUZZY FUZZYTAIL

"COME, children, it's time to get up!" called Mrs. Stubtail, the bear lady, as she stood at the foot of the stairs in the cave-house, on the side of the green hill, one morning. "Come, Neddie! Come, Beckie!"

Up out of their beds in the soft, brown autumn leaves jumped Neddie and Beckie.

"Oh, is that the Professor man, going to make us do our trick of see-sawing on the elephant's back?" cried Beckie, rubbing her eyes.

"Or maybe it's George, the tame bear, calling us," said Neddie. Then he and his sister looked at each other, and they both laughed.

"Why, we're in our own home!" exclaimed Beckie, looking around.

"So we are! And not in the circus barn at all!" added Neddie, as he noticed his own room in the cave. Then he and his sister laughed again, jumped into their little bear suits, and slid down the stair rail to breakfast.

"Well, isn't it good to be home again?" asked Mrs. Stubtail, as she put some more corn griddle cakes on the stove to cook.

"Indeed, it is!" said Beckie.

"And I guess you didn't get any nice sweet maple syrup honey like this when you ran away from home, to go with the Professor man, and George, the trick bear; did you?" asked Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear.

"Indeed, we didn't!" exclaimed Beckie, as she took another cake. "And when you called us to breakfast just now, mamma, we thought we were back in the barn again, with all the circus animals."

"Well, what are we going to do to-day?" asked Neddie, as he pushed back his chair. And, just as he did it, Uncle Wigwag, the old gentleman bear, who was always playing tricks on the animal children, tipped Neddie over backward.

"Oh, my!" cried the bear boy.

"Don't be frightened!" called Uncle Wigwag with a laugh. "I'm not going to let you fall!" And with that he caught Neddie, chair and all, up in his big paws and gave him a bear hug; he was so glad to see his little nephew back home again.

"Well, I know what I'm going to do," said Beckie, "I'm going to give my doll, Mary Ann

Puddingstick Clothespin, a nice bath, and put a clean dress on her." For, you see, the rubber doll had got rather mussed up traveling around through the woods.

"I know what you are both going to do," said Mrs. Stubtail, with a smile. "You are both going to school. You have missed enough lessons as it is, running off the way you did.

"I'll not punish you, although you did give us a bad fright, but you really must go back to school."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Neddie, scratching his nose with his claws.

"That's what I say!" spoke Beckie. You see, she and Neddie had been out of school nearly a week now, and it was rather hard to go back again.

But they were pretty good little bear children —not too goody-goody, you know, but good enough—and so they went to school.

And something happened soon after they reached their classes. Neddie talked in school. You see, the way it was, Joie Kat leaned over and asked him:

"Where have you been all this while?"

And Neddie answered back:

"Oh, in a circus. I'll tell you all about it at recess."

The teacher heard them whispering, and kept both the little bear boy and the kitten chap in after school. Joie Kat got out first, because he finished his punish-lesson sooner than Neddie.

And when Neddie Stubtail finally got out of school there was none of the other animal boys to be seen. Every one, from Sammie Littletail, the rabbit, to Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck, and Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys, had all run off to play.

"Well," said Neddie, "I guess I'll have to go home alone. Never mind, maybe I'll have an adventure." An adventure, you know, is something that happens; like when you drop your candy-penny down a crack in the boardwalk.

Well, Neddie was walking along through the woods, and wishing he could find a lollypop, or maybe some honey cakes, when, all of a sudden, he heard a little crying voice down under a pile of leaves. And it was such a sad, baby sort of crying voice that Neddie was not at all frightened. He just looked around to see who it was, thinking perhaps it might be Jillie Longtail, the little mousie girl.

But instead he saw a big tail sticking out from under the leaves, and when Neddie had poked them away with his paw there he saw only Wuzzy Fuzzytail, the tiny little fox boy.

"Oh, hello, Wuzzy!" cried Neddie. "What are you doing here?"

"I—I'm lost!" sobbed Wuzzy Fuzzytail. "I'm lost and I don't know where my home is—boo-hoo!"

"Oh, never mind! Don't cry!" said Neddie. "I'll take you home. Why did you hide under the leaves?"

"Well," said Wuzzy, "when I heard you coming along through the woods, I didn't know who it was. I thought maybe it was a bad bear, so I hid under the leaves. Boo-hoo!"

"Don't cry!" said Neddie again. "I'll take care of you."

"Oh, boo-hoo!" still sobbed Wuzzy.

"Don't say boo-hoo!" spoke Neddie. "Just say it backward for a change—say 'Hoo-boo!' Maybe that will make you stop crying."

"Hoo-boo!" said Wuzzy Fuzzytail, the little fox boy, and, surely enough, when he said that he stopped crying at once.

Then Neddie took the paw of the little fox boy in his own big one, and away they went through the woods together toward the hollow log where Wuzzy lived with his papa and mamma.

"I'm awful glad you found me, Neddie," said Wuzzy Fuzzytail to the bear boy. "I wish I could do you a favor for being so kind to me."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Neddie, sort of careless-like. "Maybe you can, some day."

Well, they were going along through the woods, when, all of a sudden, they saw right in front of them the bad old skillery-scalery alligator.

"Ah, ha!" cried the unpleasant creature with the hump nose, "at last I have you, Neddie Stubtail! And a little fox, too. Better and better! Well, I'll take the bear first and the fox boy afterward," and with that he grabbed Neddie.

"Oh, dear!" cried the bear boy. "Now I am caught. This comes of being kept in after school."

He tried to get away from the alligator, but could not, and he felt very sad. Poor little Wuzzy did not know what to do, so he just stood there shivering and wondering who would take him home in case the alligator carried Neddie away.

But foxes are very smart, even when they are small, and Wuzzy was a bright little chap. So, when he saw the alligator taking Neddie away, Wuzzy said to himself:

"I wonder if I can't help him? He helped me, so it is only fair that I should help him. What can I do?"

He thought a minute and then he said:

"Ah, ha! I have it. I'll bite the alligator's tail. He will be so surprised that he will give a jump, and then maybe Neddie can get away."

So, going softly up behind the alligator, who did not see him, Wuzzy nipped the alligator on the little end of his tail. And Wuzzy Fuzzytail had very sharp teeth, let me tell you, as all foxes have. He gave the 'gator a good, hard nip.

"Ouch! Wow! Horsecars and mustard seed!" cried the alligator, and he jumped around so suddenly, to see who was biting him, that he let go of Neddie.

"Now's your chance, Neddie! Run!" cried Wuzzy. And how Neddie did run! Wuzzy ran after him, and soon they were so far away that the alligator could not catch them. Then Neddie took Wuzzy home, and Mrs. Fuzzytail thanked the bear boy very much and gave him a piece of cake.

Then Neddie went home himself and he didn't whisper in school any more that day. So that's all to this story.

And to-morrow night if the poll parrot doesn't call the poodle dog funny names and bite a hole in the firecracker, I'll tell you about Beckie making a doll's dress.

STORY XIV

BECKIE MAKES A DOLL'S DRESS

"BECKIE! Beckie, where are you?" called Neddie Stubtail, the little boy bear, one morning after breakfast. "Come along! You'll be late for school. I'm not going to wait for you."

"I'm coming," answered Beckie from inside the cave-house on the side of the hill. "I'm coming! Wait a minute!"

"I'm not going to wait, and be late!" said Neddie, and he was not quite as polite as he might have been.

"Oh, Neddie!" exclaimed Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear, puffing and blowing, for she had been down cellar after some potatoes, and when she came up stairs she always puffed and blew.

"Why, Neddie!" she went on, "you should (puff) wait for (puff) your little (puff) sister. She doesn't very often (puff) ask you to (puff) do it. More times she has to (puff) wait for you!"

"Oh, well, I'll wait," said Neddie, and he felt

the least little bit ashamed of himself for having talked that way to his sister. "But I don't want to be late," he added.

"You won't be late—I'm coming!" called Beckie. "I just wanted to find my needle and thread."

"Needle and thread!" cried Neddie. "You don't mean to tell me, do you Beckie, that you've torn your dress and have to stop and sew it? And the last bell will ring in a few minutes! Oh, I'm not going to wait at all any longer! I'm going!" And off the little bear boy started, holding out his little stubby tail as stiff and straight as he could. But at that it wasn't much larger than your thumb, and you could hardly notice it.

"No, indeed, I haven't torn my dress, and I don't have to stop to sew it up," said Beckie, as she came running out of the cave-house. "Wait a minute, won't you please, Neddie? I'm just taking my needle and thread and some pieces of silk to school with me so I can make my new doll, Sarah Janet Picklefeather, a new dress."

"What, make your doll a dress in school?" cried Neddie, stopping and turning around. "Teacher never will let you, Beckie Stubtail—never! And you know it!"

"Oh, but I'm not going to sew in school," said

Beckie, sweetly. " I'm taking my lunch with me, and I'm not coming home to dinner, and I'm going to sew on my doll's dress during the noon recess. And I've got some honey cakes for my lunch, too!"

" Oh, wow!" cried Neddie. " So that's how it is, eh? Then I'm going to take my lunch, too, and stay at school and have some fun. May I have some honey cakes, mamma?"

" Oh, yes, I guess so," answered Mrs. Stubtail, who, with Aunt Piffy, had come to the door to see the children start for school.

Then Neddie ran back to get his lunch put up. And such a busy time as there was, for a few minutes. Mrs. Stubtail and Aunt Piffy both tried to put the lunch up, so Neddie would not be late, and Mrs. Stubtail dropped the bread, butter side down, and Aunt Piffy lost her breath and could hardly find it again. Then Uncle Wigwag, the bear gentleman, who was always playing tricks, sat down in the fly paper by mistake, and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, had to pull the sticky stuff off his friend, Uncle Wigwag.

And that wasn't all. For Mr. Whitewash was shaving his whiskers, and when he wasn't looking, Mrs. Stubtail knocked over the molasses pitcher into his cup, full of soap-suds lather, and

when Mr. Whitewash went to lather his face again he was almost as badly stuck-up as Uncle Wigwag was with the fly paper.

Oh, my! Such goings on!

But, finally, Neddie's lunch was put up and all this while Beckie waited for him, and she never once said "hurry up!" or "I'm going on, we'll be late!" Not once did she say it, though she might well have done so, since the last bell had been ringing for some time.

But finally Beckie and Neddie got to school and they were only about one forty-'leventh part of a second late, and that didn't count.

I wish I could tell you all that happened in school that day—how Neddie went to the blackboard, and wrote a fine story of a poodle dog that could stand on its head. And how Joie Kat drew such a real-like picture of a mouse that Tommie Kat, Joie's brother, wanted to chase it, and it was all his sister Kittie Kat could do to stop him.

But I haven't room to tell you any of those things now. I must tell you about Beckie making her doll's dress. Now, hold on, boys, if you please. You might think this is a girl's story, but it isn't—that is not all of it, even if it is partly about a doll's dress.

If you just listen you'll see that Beckie did a

very brave thing, which shows you that girls can do things as well as boys can, and lots of times better. Take, for instance, braiding hair—a boy couldn't braid his hair to save him, but look how easily a girl can do it, and chew gum, and read a book and talk, all at the same time. Well, I guess!

Anyhow, pretty soon it was recess time, and all the animal children could come out of school. Some went home to their dinner, and others, who had brought their lunch, found nice cozy places where they could eat it.

Neddie went off with Tommie and Joie Kat, and with Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys. And as soon as Beckie had finished her lunch she got out her needle and thread and thimble and the pieces of silk, and began to make a dress for her doll, Sarah Janet Picklefeather.

First she sewed in some—tuckers, I think they're called, or maybe it was puckers. Anyhow, she sewed them in the dress, Beckie did, to make it look nice.

Then the little bear girl made a few frills around the neck and down the side she sewed in some rosettes. Around the middle she gathered some insertions, and then on the bottom—let me see now, what did she put on the bottom? Oh, I know, it was a ruffle. (You boys may skip

this part if you like. I wouldn't write it only I have to put in something about the dress, or the girls wouldn't read the story.)

Where were we? Oh, I remember. We'd gotten to the bottom part of the dress. And that reminds me, if we're at the bottom of the dress that's all there is to it, and I can stop, and so I'm at the end of that part, and don't have to write any more, thank goodness!

Anyhow, Beckie was sitting on the steps of the school, in the warm sunshine, sewing away on Miss Picklefeather's dress, making her needle go in and out, when, all of a sudden, along came a bad old, big bear who didn't like little bear girls, nor bear boys, either.

"Ah, ha!" growled the bad bear. "This is the time I have caught you! I've been waiting a long time to get you! Now I'm going to carry you off to my den, and make you wash dishes for ever and ever. Bur-r-r-r-r-r-r-r!"

Beckie looked up quickly and started to run, but she had no chance. The bad bear was right in front of her, and the door, before which she was sitting, was one that was hardly ever used, so it had been locked. Beckie couldn't escape that way. She looked all around the school yard, but none of her friends was in sight. Neither

was Neddie, who might have saved her, and as for the teacher, she had gone home to her dinner.

"Oh, help! Help!" cried poor little Beckie. She didn't want the bear to take her away, and, as for washing dishes, she just hated that work, though she didn't mind doing them for her mamma.

"Pooh! No one will help you!" cried the bad bear. "So don't bother to call. Come along!" And he reached out his paws to grab Beckie. Then he happened to notice the doll's dress, and, being a very curious sort of bear, he asked: "What are you doing?"

"I am making a dress for my doll," answered Beckie, as politely as she could, with all her trembling. Then she thought of a trick to play on that bear. "Would you like to see me sew on the doll's dress?" Beckie asked, sweetly.

"Well, you might show me one or two stitches," said the bear, sort of careless-like. "But, mind you, I'll carry you off just the same."

"All right," answered Beckie. "Look closely now. You see, I put the needle in this side of the silk and I push it through with my thimble."

"Yes," said the bear, "I see."

"Now look closely," said Beckie, and the bear leaned forward and put his nose and eyes close

down. "And then," said Beckie, "I pull my needle out this way, and—I stick it in your soft and tender nose—that way!" And with that she did it, jabbing the needle into the bear's nose!

"Oh, wow!" cried the bad bear, and he was so surprised that he turned a back somersault and then he ran away off in the woods to get some honey to put on his sore nose. So he didn't take Beckie away after all. Which shows you that it's a good thing to make a doll's dress, sometimes.

Then, soon the other children came back to school, and so did the teacher, and lessons went on and everybody said Beckie was very brave. And I think so, too, and in the story after this, if the ashman doesn't take our furnace out in the yard so that it catches cold and can't go to the moving picture show, I'll tell you about Neddie's joke on Uncle Wigwag.

STORY XV

NEDDIE'S JOKE ON UNCLE WIGWAG

"WHAT is the matter? Why are you laughing so much?" asked Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear, of Uncle Wigwag, the comical old bear gentleman, one morning at the breakfast table.

"Oh, ho! Ha, ha! I tee-hee—ho—ho! I just can't help it!" said Uncle Wigwag, giggling, so that he spilled some honey on the tablecloth. And Mrs. Stubtail, the mamma bear, said:

"Oh, there you go again!"

"Excuse me!" spoke Uncle Wigwag, and then he laughed some more, and some milk he was drinking went down his Sunday throat, and, as the day happened to be Thursday, it was altogether wrong you see, and Uncle Wigwag choked and sniffed and snuffled and laughed, all at the same time.

"Well, I do declare!" exclaimed Aunt Piffy, as she patted Uncle Wigwag on the back, so he wouldn't lose his breath. And he didn't, I'm glad to say, but Aunt Piffy accidentally pounded him

so hard that she lost part of her own breath, and when she talked next time she had to go like this:

"I never (puff) saw you behave so (puff) at the table before (puff) Waggie, in all my (puff) life. Never! (puff). What is the (puff) matter, Waggie?" You see she called Uncle Wigwag by the name of Waggie for short.

"Oh!" said Uncle Wigwag, when finally he could talk, "I just thought of something, I did! It made me laugh!"

Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, looked at Uncle Wigwag quite severely, but he said nothing, and only went on eating his breakfast.

"I think I know what made Uncle Wigwag laugh," said Beckie Stubtail, the little girl bear, to Neddie, her brother, some time later.

"What?" he asked as he looked for his books to take to school. "What was it, Beckie?"

"He's thinking of a joke to play," said Beckie.

"I believe you're right," went on Neddie. "Oh, Beckie, and I've just thought of something, too."

"What is it?" she asked as she looked to see if her doll, Sarah Janet Picklefeather, was nicely covered up in the puppy dog's basket, so she wouldn't get cold while Beckie was at school.

"We'll just play a trick on Uncle Wigwag," went on Neddie. "He plays so many on us that it's about time we played one on him."

"Oh, yes, let's do it!" cried Beckie, clapping her little paws. "But it won't be a mean or an unkind trick, will it, Neddie? For Uncle Wigwag is very good to us, and gives us lollypops, even if he does play a joke on us now and then."

"Oh, no, it won't be a bad trick," said Neddie, laughing. "Only a funny one."

So the two little bear children went on to school, talking on the way of the joke they would play on Uncle Wigwag. In fact, Neddie was thinking so much about this that he did not pay enough attention to his lessons, and when the teacher asked him: "Why does a cow eat grass?" Neddie answered: "Because it's a joke!"

You see, he was thinking of the one he and Beckie were going to play. But the teacher didn't know that, so she made Neddie go down to the foot of the glass for not answering correctly.

Well, when school was out, Neddie and Beckie hurried off by themselves to play the joke on Uncle Wigwag.

"Have you thought of what to do yet," asked Beckie.

"Yes," said Neddie, "you know it was cold last night, and the little puddle of water near our

cave-house is frozen over. It's as slippery as glass. Now we'll cover the puddle over with some sawdust, so you can't see the ice. Then we'll make believe write a letter to Uncle Wigwag and we'll put it on the top of the sawdust in the middle of the frozen puddle.

"He'll run out to get the letter, when we tell him there is one for him, and he'll slip on the ice and go down 'ko-bunk!'"

"Oh, but won't he get hurt?" asked Beckie, anxious-like.

"No, for his fur is so thick now that he won't feel the fall," said Neddie. "Come on, we'll play the joke on him."

So the two little bear children got some sawdust, and, when no one was looking, they sprinkled it on the ice so the slippery stuff could not be seen.

Then they made believe write a letter to Uncle Wigwag, and, putting it in a large envelope, with his name on the outside, they put this right in the middle of the frozen puddle, tossing it there so they themselves would not have to walk on the ice and maybe fall down.

"Now, we'll hide behind this tree," said Neddie, "and watch for Uncle Wigwag to fall down." They had left word with Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, to tell Uncle Wigwag,

as soon as he came in, that there was a letter for him on the sawdust. Mr. Whitewash, not knowing anything of the joke Neddie was playing, said he would tell Uncle Wigwag of the letter.

Well, after a while, when Neddie and Beckie had been hiding behind the tree for some time, out came Uncle Wigwag.

"Now, watch!" whispered Neddie. "See him tumble when he gets on the ice!"

But, instead of going over and picking up the letter, Uncle Wigwag put a box down on the ground, near the path by which Neddie and Beckie went to school, and then the old gentleman bear himself went and hid behind a tree.

"Oh, what do you know about that!" whispered Neddie. "He is playing a joke on us, just as I said he would. There's nothing in that box but a piece of brick, or maybe a lot of stones. Uncle Wigwag expects we'll pick it up, thinking it's candy, and when we open it he'll cry 'April fool!' even if it isn't the month to play those jokes."

"I believe that's what he is doing," said Beckie, laughing.

"Well, we'll just not be fooled," went on Neddie. "We'll leave the make-believe box of candy alone, and wait until we see Uncle Wig-

wag go out on the ice after his letter and fall down."

So the two little bear children, laughing to themselves at the joke they were playing on their fun-loving uncle, waited behind the tree. Uncle Wigwag waited behind his tree, too.

Pretty soon, along came Tommie Kat, the kitten boy. He saw the white box on the path, and cried:

"Oh, joy! I guess this is something good!"

"Watch him get fooled!" whispered Neddie. But lo and behold! Tommie opened the box and there it was filled with the nicest kind of candy! There wasn't a stone or brick in it.

"Oh, yum-yum!" cried Tommie, as he ate the sweet stuff.

"Oh, dear!" cried Beckie. It *was* candy, after all. What kind of a joke do you call that?"

"I—I don't know," answered Neddie, rubbing his nose with his paw. "I guess Uncle Wigwag played a different one this time."

"Then we oughtn't to play a mean joke on him, as long as he played such a nice candy joke on us," said the little bear girl.

"I guess you're right," agreed Neddie. "We'll tell him not to go get that letter."

But, before they could do this, Tommie Kat

saw the white envelope out on the sawdust-covered ice puddle.

"Oh, joy!" he cried again. "Maybe that's more candy!" And, before either Beckie or Neddie could call to him, Tommie rushed out to get the make-believe letter. And as soon as he got on the ice, which he couldn't see because of the sawdust on top, down he went ker-bunko! his feet sliding out from under him, and the candy scattering all over.

"Oh, dear!" cried Tommie Kat. "I'm all sawdust! And the nice candy! Oh, dear! It's all lost!"

Neddie and Beckie rushed out from behind their tree.

"We didn't mean that you should fall, Tommie," said Neddie, as he helped the little kitten boy to stand up. "That was for a joke on Uncle Wigwag."

"Well, I don't call it a very nice joke," said Tommie, rubbing his nose. "But, anyhow, I did find some candy. Help me pick it up."

"I guess that was for us," said Beckie. "It was one of Uncle Wigwag's jokes!"

As the bear children and the kitten boy were picking up the scattered sweet stuff, out came Uncle Wigwag from behind his tree.

"Ha! Ha!" he cried to Neddie. "I guess

I fooled you after all, didn't I? And so you were going to fool me, too, eh? But Tommie got my joke instead. Oh, dear!" and he laughed so hard that he got the hiccoughs, and Aunt Piffy had to rush out of the cave-house to pat him on the back.

And then, all of a sudden, the bad bear, in whose nose Beckie had stuck the needle when she was making her doll's dress, came rushing up, growling and wanting to bite some one. But Neddie Stubtail, brave little chap that he was, threw a hard lollypop at the bad bear, hitting him on his sore nose, making him cry, "Wow!" and run away off in the woods where he belonged.

Then the rest of the candy was picked up, and Beckie and Neddie said they were sorry they had tried to play the ice trick on Uncle Wigwag, and everything was all right.

And on the next page, if the penholder doesn't let the ink bottle fall out of the window and make a black mark on the sidewalk, I'll tell you about Mr. Whitewash and the stovepipe.

STORY XVI

MR. WHITEWASH AND THE STOVE PIPE

"Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter?"

"Where's all that smoke coming from?"

"Oh, ker-choo! Wuzz! Fuzz!"

"Snicker-snacker-snookum!"

Every one seemed shouting at once.

There was great excitement in the cave-house, where the Stubtail family of bears lived. Neddie and Beckie, the two little bear children, had jumped out of bed and were choking and sneezing in the hall.

"Why, the house is filled with smoke!" cried out Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear, and she puffed so hard because her breath nearly got away from her, that she almost slid downstairs.

"Is the house on fire?" asked Papa Stubtail, as he looked around for a pail of water.

"Maybe this is one of Uncle Wigwag's tricks," said Beckie, as she wiped the tears out of her eyes. She wasn't exactly crying, you

understand, but you know smoke always makes tears come into your eyes.

"No, no! There's no fire!" called Mamma Stubtail, from down in the kitchen. "I was getting breakfast when the stovepipe suddenly fell down. I guess you'll have to come and fix it, Hiram," she called to Mr. Stubtail. His first name was Hiram, you see.

"Let me do it," said Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, and before any one else could hurry down to the kitchen Mr. Whitewash had slid down the stairs, and soon he had the stovepipe in place again, and the stove cooked things without smoking, and Mrs. Stubtail finished getting breakfast.

But that wasn't all about Mr. Whitewash and the stovepipe. Just you wait until you get to the end of the story and you'll see.

Soon breakfast was over, and Beckie and Neddie had started for school. Then Mr. Stubtail went to work, and Uncle Wigwag went over to call on Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, to talk about Christmas and Santa Claus.

That left Mr. Whitewash home with Mrs. Stubtail, who was washing the breakfast dishes.

"How did the stovepipe happen to come down?" asked Mr. Whitewash, curious-like.

"I guess it's getting old and couldn't stand

up much longer," answered the lady bear. "The first I knew it had tumbled over and the smoke poured out."

"Yes, there was lots of smoke," said Mr. Whitewash. "We all were frightened. I must take a look at that pipe," which he did, putting on his glasses so he could see better.

"Ha!" he cried, after a bit. "I thought so. That stove needs a new pipe. I'll go after it and fix it before the children come home. Then we won't have any more trouble when you get up to get the breakfast, Mrs. Stubtail."

"That will be very kind of you," said the lady bear.

So off Mr. Whitewash went to get the stovepipe. And very nice he looked, too, walking along through the woods and over the fields, with his white fur all combed out like a French poodle's when he's had his bath. Mr. Whitewash was snow-white—and when he walked along sometimes his friends took him for a snowman, and threw snowballs at him. But Mr. Whitewash never minded that.

Well, he got to the stovepipe store all right, but the cow gentleman, who kept it, said:

"I am very sorry, Mr. Whitewash, but we are all out of stovepipe this morning. I expect some in at the end of the week."

"But I cannot wait that long," said the white polar bear gentleman. "Our old pipe may fall down any day, and fill the house with smoke again. Then the fire engines will come out and squirt water in our cave, and there'll be a terrible time. I must have some stovepipe."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the cow gentleman. "I sold some pipe to Grandfather Goosey Gander, the duck gentleman, the other day, and after he used it awhile he said he wanted a different kind.

"So he took down that I had sold him, and got some different kind. The old pipe is out in his back yard now, and I think he would give it to you."

"It will do no harm to ask, anyhow," said Mr. Whitewash.

Over he went to the house of Grandfather Goosey Gander, and there, surely enough, was the pipe.

"Certainly you may have it," said the duck gentleman. "I am glad to give it to you. But be careful, for it is full of black soot, and it may get on your white coat."

"Oh, I can wrap it up in a paper," said Mr. Whitewash, which he did. Then, taking care not to get the stovepipe, though it was wrapped up, against his snow-white fur, off Mr. White-

wash started for the cave-house, where he lived with the Stubtail family.

Did you ever put up a stovepipe? No, I guess you did not. Well, it is not easy work, as Mr. Whitewash soon found. Either the pipe he got from Grandfather Goosey Gander was too large to fit in the chimney hole or else the chimney hole was too small to let the pipe slide in. Anyhow, Mr. Whitewash tried and tried again, and once more, but the pipe would not fit.

"I guess I'll have to get on a stepladder," said the polar gentleman, breathing hard.

"Oh, how black your paws are!" exclaimed Aunt Piffy, the fat lady bear.

"Yes, it comes off the stovepipe," said Mr. Whitewash. "Please bring the stepladder."

So Aunt Piffy and Mrs. Stubtail went for the ladder, but in bringing it through the kitchen door it slipped and caught on Mrs. Stubtail's paws, so that she fell down, and so did the fat lady; and Aunt Piffy lost her breath.

Aunt Piffy could hardly get her breath back again, either, but she caught it just as it was slipping out of the door and then she was all right again—at least for a while.

"Now I guess I'll fix this pipe!" cried Mr. Whitewash, as he stood upon the ladder. Care-

fully he shoved the stovepipe into the chimney hole, but still it stuck.

"It must go in!" cried the polar bear gentleman, "or else we can't have a fire in the stove to cook dinner."

Then he gave a big push on the pipe. But something slipped. Part of what slipped was the stepladder and the other part of what slipped was Mr. Whitewash and the third part of it was the stovepipe.

Down they fell in a heap together on the floor.

"Oh!" screamed Aunt Piffy.

"Oh, me! Oh, my!" cried Mrs. Stubtail. "Shall I get the doctor?"

Mr. Whitewash didn't say anything for a little while, and then he remarked:

"Please get me a dusting brush!"

And he certainly needed it, for the soot from the stovepipe had scattered all over him, and instead of being a pure white bear, he was speckled black and white now, like those dogs which always run along under a carriage.

But when Aunt Piffy and Mrs. Stubtail tried to brush the black soot off Mr. Whitewash, they found they were only making it worse. The brush scattered the black all over him instead of leaving it only in spots.

"I guess you had better not try," said Mr.

Whitewash. "I'll take a bath after I get this pipe up."

"Can you get it up?" asked Mrs. Stubtail.

"Of course I can," said Mr. Whitewash.

So up on the stepladder the polar bear gentleman got again, and he tried to fix the stovepipe. He almost had it in the chimney hole, and he was just getting ready to holler "Hurray!" when, all of a sudden, there was a growling noise at the back door, and Mrs Stubtail screamed:

"Oh, a lion! Here's a lion coming after us!" and she and Aunt Piffy ran in the parlor and hid under the sofa.

"Bur-r-r-r-r-r!" roared the lion. "I'm a bad chap from the circus; and I've come after Beckie and Neddie!"

Then he roared again, and so loudly that he made the stepladder tremble. This shook it so that Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, fell down again. This time the stovepipe landed right on top of his head, like the tall silk hat Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, wears. And the soot from the stovepipe scattered all over Mr. Whitewash some more until he was as black as a piece of coal.

"Get out of here!" called Mr. Whitewash to the bad lion, and the lion was so scared at seeing a white bear suddenly turn black, and wear a stove-

pipe for a hat, that he ran away as fast as he could, taking his tufted tail with him. So he didn't get Neddie or Beckie after all, and a little later Mr. Whitewash got the pipe all nicely fixed.

Then he took a bath, for, oh! he was so black! But soon he was as nice and white again as a French poodle. So there was no more trouble with smoke in the Stubtail cave-house, and when Beckie and Neddie came home from school they made molasses taffy on the stove.

So that's all I can tell you now, but on the page after this, in case our cat doesn't try to walk the telephone wire and fall off into the rose bush, I'll tell you about Papa Stubtail in a trap.

LOUIS
W. SA

STORY XVII

PAPA STUBTAIL IN A TRAP

Now to-night I'm going to tell you a story about something sad that happened to Hiram Stubtail, the papa bear. And I will not make it any sadder than I can help. But still I have to tell things exactly as they happened, or it would not be fair, and we must always try to be fair and honest in this world, no matter what happens. Even when we're sad we must try.

But I will say this, though there is a sad part to the story, there is also a glad part. And the glad part I'll put in last, so that when you go to bed you will dream about that. I always like to have pleasant dreams; don't you?

Once I dreamed I found a lot of money and to make sure I'd have it when I awakened I put it under my pillow. But when I woke up the money was all gone. Dream money always does that, you know. It disappears.

And once I dreamed I found a lollypop, and when I put my hand under my pillow there it was

—all sticky! My little girl had put it there to keep safe for the night. So that part of my dream came true.

But I started to tell you about Papa Stubtail's trouble, and I guess you don't want to hear about my troubles.

Anyhow, one Saturday, when there was no school, Beckie and Neddie Stubtail, the two little bear children, started off to the woods to see if they could have any fun. It was quite cold, and it seemed as if it were going to snow, but they did not mind that, for they had on their warm fur coats.

"I know what let's do!" exclaimed Beckie. "Let's go over and call on Uncle Wiggily. You know since he found his fortune he has lots of money, and he might give us some to get a popcorn ball with."

"All right, I'll go with you," agreed Neddie. So they went to the house of the old gentleman rabbit. They found him at home, and he was glad to see them. And, surely enough, he gave each of the bear children a penny to buy a popcorn ball. Bears are very fond of those sweet things, you know.

Well, while Neddie and Beckie were enjoying the popcorn balls, their papa had started to come home from where he worked in the bed factory,

making nice fuzzy mattresses, fluffing them up with his sharp claws, for little bears to sleep on.

"I will go home a little early to-day," said Mr. Stubtail, to himself, "and take Neddie and Beckie to a football game. They will enjoy that."

Well, as he was walking along, thinking how funny it was for Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear gentleman, to put up a stovepipe and get all black—as Mr. Stubtail was thinking of this, I say—all of a sudden he heard some one crying:

"Help! Help! Oh, will no one help me?"

"Ha! Who can that be?" exclaimed Mr. Stubtail, looking all around, and thinking maybe it might be one of his own children, little Neddie or Beckie, in trouble.

But he could see no one, though the voice still cried out:

"Help! Oh, please help me!"

"I would help you if I could see you," said Mr. Stubtail, looking up and down and sideways and even around the corner. Still he could see no one, and then the voice said:

"Here I am, right down by this board fence!"

Then Mr. Stubtail looked more closely, and he saw, crouched on the ground, at the bottom of a board fence, Jollie Longtail, the little boy mousie.

"Oh, there you are!" exclaimed Mr. Stubtail.

"But why are you crying, Jollie, and why don't you run away?"

"I can't run away," answered the mousie boy, because my long tail is fast through a knot hole in the fence, and that is the reason I am crying."

"Your tail fast through a knot hole in the fence?" exclaimed Mr. Stubtail. "Why, how did that happen?"

"Well, you see," explained Jollie. "I was creeping along here, looking for a piece of cheese, when my tail slipped through the hole. And, before I knew it, another boy mousie named Snippy-Snoopy, who doesn't like me, came along and tied a knot in my tail so I couldn't pull it back through the hole again. And here I am held fast. Will you please untie the knot in my tail? I can't reach it."

"Oh course I will!" exclaimed the bear gentleman, and very gently, so as not to hurt Jollie, he untied the knot in the mousie boy's tail, so Jollie could run along home.

"Oh, thank you so much!" he called to Mr. Stubtail, most politely. "And if ever I can do you a favor I will!"

Then Mr. Stubtail hurried on home, thinking how nice it would be to take Beckie and Neddie to the football game. And I guess Mr. Stubtail was in such a hurry that he did not notice where

he was going for, all of a sudden, he stepped into a steel trap.

"Snap!" it went shut, catching him on the paw. And, oh! how it did hurt.

"My goodness me! Oh, dear! This is terrible!" cried Mr. Stubtail. "I am caught!"

He tried to pull his paw out but the more he pulled the worse it hurt, and he had to stop. Then he tried to lift up the trap in his other paw, thinking maybe he could carry it to the blacksmith shop and have it filed off. But the trap was fast to a tree by a big chain and Mr. Stubtail could not get it loose. There he was caught fast.

This is the sad part of the story. I'll make it just as short as I can and get to the glad part.

Well, poor Mr. Stubtail stood there in the trap not knowing what to do. He thought he would never see his home again, or his wife, or Neddie, or Beckie, nor yet Mr. Whitewash and Aunt Piffy and Uncle Wigwag.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Mr. Stubtail. "What ever shall I do? Soon the hunter who put this trap here will come along and get me. Then it will be all up with Papa Stubtail."

But just then he heard a little rustling in the dried leaves, and a tiny voice asked:

"Can I help you, Mr. Stubtail?"

The bear gentleman looked down and saw

Jollie Longtail, the mousie boy, whose tail he had untied a little while ago.

"Oh, Jollie, it's you, is it?" asked Mr. Stubtail. "No, I'm afraid you can't help me. You see, this trap and chain are made of iron, and though you have very sharp little teeth to gnaw through wood, you can't gnaw iron."

"No," said Jollie, "I can't do that, but maybe I could go and get help for you."

"So you can!" cried Mr. Stubtail, trying not to let the little mousie boy see how much pain he was in. "The very thing, Jollie. Run home and get Mr. Whitewash and Uncle Wigwag, and any one else you can, to come and get me out of this trap before the hunter comes."

Away ran the mousie boy as fast as he could go. But it was a long way to the cave-house—not very far for a bear gentleman, perhaps, who can take long steps, but quite a distance for a little mouse chap.

"But I'll get there in time!" cried Jollie. "I must save Mr. Stubtail, for he saved me. I'll get there!"

Faster and faster he ran on. Once a bad fox tried to grab Jollie, but the mousie hid under a log until the fox had passed on. Again a big horned owl bird, with staring eyes, swooped down on him but Jollie dodged under a stone and

the bird stubbed its beak, and didn't get the mouse.

Then Jollie reached the cave-house and told what had happened to Mr. Stubtail.

Mrs. Stubtail was so excited that she nearly fainted and fell into a tub of water when she heard the news.

Aunt Piffy lost her breath completely this time, and it was several seconds before Jollie could run after it for her and bring it back.

"What!" cried Neddie, for he and Beckie had come home. "My papa in a trap!"

"Yes, and he needs help quickly!" cried Jollie.

"Then I'll go get my uncle and Mr. Whitewash!" said Neddie. Off he rushed to find Uncle Wigwag and the polar bear gentleman. They also got Uncle Wiggily, and Gup, the kind, strong horse, and as many other animal gentlemen as they could, and back they hurried to where Mr. Stubtail was in the trap.

Together, with the help of a kind circus elephant, they pulled the trap open and the bear gentleman was free. Then they all hurried away before the hunter man, with his gun and dogs, could get them. Mr. Stubtail limped a little and was lame for some time, but that is better than staying forever in a trap.

When he got home his wife was out of the tub

of water, and she and Aunt Piffy made some nice salve for Mr. Stubtail's sore foot. Then they had a lovely supper with honey ice cream, and everybody was happy and they couldn't do enough for Jollie Longtail. And this is the glad part of the story.

So this shows you that you should always untie a knot in a mousie's tail if you can, for you never can tell when a mousie might help you.

And no more to-night, if you please, but very soon, if the milkman's horse doesn't come up on our front stoop and take our doormat to wipe his feet on, I'll tell you about Mamma Stubtail's honey cakes.

STORY XVIII

MAMMA STUBTAIL'S HONEY CAKES

"Oh, mamma!" cried little Neddie Stubtail, the bear cub, as he got ready to go to school one morning. "What is it that smells so good in your kitchen?"

"What smells so good?" spoke Mrs. Stubtail, the mamma bear. "Well, I don't know. Maybe it's the tea kettle boiling."

"Oh, mamma, you're joking just as Uncle Wigwag often does," said Beckie, the little bear girl. "I, too, smell something good. Are you making candy?"

"Now, you children just run along to school and say your lessons," said Mrs. Stubtail, as she looked to see if there was any stove blacking on her apron. But there was none, I'm glad to say.

"Little bears should be seen and not heard," said Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear, as she came up from down cellar, where she had been looking to see if any dust had gotten in the eyes of the potatoes.

"Oh, but we smell something good!" cried Neddie. "Do tell us what it is, mamma."

Then he and his sister Beckie sniffed and snuffed real hard, to try and find out what it was that smelled so good. It was like molasses candy and popcorn and lollypops and ice cream cones, all rolled into one. But Neddie and Beckie could not tell exactly what it was.

Anyhow, the school bell rang just then, and they had to run on to their lessons, so they didn't have time to find out what it was their mamma was cooking in the kitchen that smelled so nice.

But at noontime, when they came home for dinner, they discovered the secret. Neddie ate up his dessert and then he blinked both his eyes at his sister Beckie. That meant, in bear language:

"Come on outside. I want to talk to you."

Then Beckie wiggled both her ears and this meant: "All right. I'll be out in a minute."

And when Beckie met Neddie outside the house and they were on their way to school, Beckie asked:

"What is it, Neddie? What smelled so good?"

"It's honey cakes," said he.

"Honey cakes?" exclaimed Beckie. "Why, we don't have them until Christmas."

"I know," said Neddie, "but it's almost Christmas now. Mamma is making a lot of honey cakes. That's what smelled so good this morning. They'll be done this afternoon and she'll put them out on the back steps to cool, as she always does."

"Well, is that all?" asked Beckie, anxious-like.

"No, not quite," said Neddie. "When we come home from school you and I will go softly up on the back stoop and we'll get some of the honey cakes. They'll be cool by then."

"Oh, but that's not right!" cried Beckie, "We can't eat mamma's honey cakes without asking her."

"I didn't say anything about eating them," spoke Neddie. "I just said we'd take a few cakes in our paws. Then we'll go to mamma and say we saw the cakes out on the back stoop, and we'll ask her if we can eat them. Mind you, we won't take so much as a smitch of one before we ask her!

"But when she sees we have the cakes of course she'll let us take a nibble. Even Aunt Piffy would do that. Otherwise we'd never get a honey cake until Christmas. Will you do it?" asked Neddie.

"Oh, well; yes, I guess so," said Beckie. "But I'm afraid it isn't exactly right."

"Oh, yes, it is," said Neddie. "Now, come on to school, and when we come home this afternoon we'll get some honey cakes."

But I'm afraid, after all, that what Neddie was going to do was not exactly right. However, let us see what happens, as the telephone girl says.

Neddie and Beckie went on to school, but they did not do very well in their lessons, for they were thinking so much about honey cakes. And if they had known that Uncle Wigwag, the old bear gentleman, who was always playing tricks, had heard them talking about what they were going to do, maybe they would not have felt so happy.

For Uncle Wigwag, hiding behind a stump, had heard just what Neddie and Beckie had planned to do to get some honey cakes. And the old joking gentleman bear said to himself:

"Now, I'll play a joke on those children. It isn't right for them to do that, and I'll teach them a lesson."

So he went out on the back steps, where the pans of honey cakes were cooling. Honey cakes, you know, are made from honey and sugar and other sweet things, and are very good.

Little bear children love them more than anything else.

"Let me see now. What trick shall I play?" said Uncle Wigwag to himself. "Oh, I know. I'll put a lot of glue on the back steps, and make them all sticky like fly paper. Then, when Neddie and Beckie come up to get the honey cakes they'll step in the glue, and they'll be held fast, and they'll make such a fuss that their mamma and Aunt Piffy will hear them. They'll come out, and I guess those bear cubs will never take any more honey cakes without asking."

So Uncle Wigwag got a lot of sticky glue from the doll factory where they glue dolls' wigs on, and he spread the sticky stuff all over the back steps, where, on the top rail, Mrs. Stubtail had set the honey cakes to cool.

Oh, how delicious they smelled! Uncle Wigwag could not help taking one, but of course that was all right, as he paid his board to Mrs. Stubtail.

Then Uncle Wigwag spread out the sticky glue, taking care not to step in it himself, and then he went and hid behind a stump to see what would happen when Neddie and Beckie came softly along to get the honey cakes.

But something else happened. I'll tell you all about it if you'll listen.

Neddie and Beckie hurried out of school that afternoon. They had managed to get through their lessons, and were very anxious to eat some of the honey cakes—that is, if their mamma would let them.

"I hope they're out on the stoop when we get there," said Beckie.

"Oh, you honey cakes!" exclaimed Neddie, jolly-like. "Of course they'll be there."

And just then, as it happened, there was a bad old wolf behind the fence. And he heard what the bear cub children were saying.

"Honey cakes; eh?" exclaimed the wolf. "I guess I'll go get some for myself."

So he ran through the woods, a shorter way than Neddie and Beckie went, and the old wolf got there first, just as the one did in the Little Red Riding Hood story.

"Ah! ha!" exclaimed the wolf, as he smelled the honey cakes. "Now for a good meal! I'm glad I heard Neddie and Beckie talking about this. Oh, you honey cakes!"

The old wolf went softly to the stoop. He looked all around, but he saw no one. Mrs. Stubtail was washing the dishes and Aunt Piffy had gone to lie down and take a nap. Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, was over visiting Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, and

Uncle Wigwag, as we know, was hiding behind the stump.

The wolf saw no one, and up the back steps he went to get the honey cakes that were set out there to cool. But something happened.

All of a sudden the wolf stepped in the glue and stuck fast. All four feet were caught in the sticky stuff and when the wolf tried to get loose he only stuck the faster.

"Oh, wow!" howled the wolf. "Oh, dear, I'm caught!"

Uncle Wigwag, hiding behind the stump, heard the noisy noise and, not yet having seen the wolf, he cried:

"Ah, ha! Now I have caught Neddie and Beckie. I guess this will be a lesson to them not to take honey cakes again!"

Out rushed the old gentleman bear, and when he saw the wolf caught in the glue, instead of the little bear cub children, Uncle Wigwag did not know what to say, he was so surprised.

And when the wolf saw the bear gentleman he cried:

"Oh, dear! Don't bite me! I'll be good! I'll not take any of your honey cakes!"

"You'd better not," spoke Uncle Wigwag. And then the wolf was so frightened that he managed to pull his feet loose from the sticky

glue, and away he ran without a single honey cake.

And when Neddie and Beckie came along later to take some cakes, intending to ask if they could eat them, they found every one so excited at the bear cave that they didn't take any cakes at all. Besides, Mamma Stubtail had lifted the honey cakes inside after the wolf made such a racket.

"But you were almost caught!" said Uncle Wigwag to Neddie and Beckie, as he told them what he had heard them say. Then they promised never to think of such a thing again, and their mamma gave them each some nice honey cakes for supper. But the wolf had none, and it served him right.

So Uncle Wigwag played his trick just the same, though, on a wolf instead of the bear children. Then Aunt Piffy scrubbed all the glue off the back steps and everybody was happy.

And in the next story, if the molasses jug doesn't go down cellar and cry in the coalbin so the coal is all stuck up, I'll tell you about Neddie and the kindling wood.

STORY XIX

NEDDIE AND THE KINDLING WOOD

"NEDDIE! Neddie! Where are you?" called Mrs. Stubtail, the mamma bear, one afternoon as she stood on the back steps, which were still colored dark from the glue that Uncle Wigwag had put there, the time Neddie and Beckie were going to take the honey cakes, as I told you in the other story. "Neddie! Neddie!" called the mamma bear.

There was no answer for a moment, and then Tommie, the little kitten boy, came running as fast as he could run.

"What's the matter, Tommie Kat?" asked Mrs. Stubtail. "Is a bad rat chasing you?"

"Oh, no, not a bad rat," answered Tommie, as he quickly hid under an old ash can. "You see we're playing hide and seek, and Neddie, he's it. I'm hiding away from him. Don't tell where I am; will you?"

"Of course not," said Mrs. Stubtail, with a laugh. "So that's why Neddie didn't answer

me," she went on. "He's playing a game. Very well, Tommie Kat, but when you get in home-free, or when Neddie finds you, just tell him for me, if you please, that I want to see him."

"I will," promised Tommie Kat, and then he pulled his tail in close under the ash can so when Neddie came to look for him he wouldn't see him.

Truly enough, in a short time, Neddie Stub-tail, the little boy bear, came looking for all the animal children who were playing the game. He found Jimmie Wibblewobble, the boy duck, hiding under some corn meal sacks. Then he saw Johnnie Bushytail, the squirrel, in a nut bag, and Neddie saw Jackie and Pettie Bow Wow cuddled up together behind the rain water barrel.

But Neddie could not find Tommie Kat, and finally the little boy bear had to call out:

"Givie up! Givie up! Come on in free!"

This meant that when Tommie ran out from where he was hiding Neddie would not tag him, and the kitten boy would not be "it." So out Tommie came from under the ash can, and Neddie said:

"Oh, so that's where you were; eh?"

"Sure I was," said Tommie. "But say, Neddie, your mamma wants you."

"Really?" asked Neddie.

"Really, truly, and truly ruly," laughed Tommie.

Just then Mrs. Stubtail came out and called again:

"Neddie! Neddie! I want you!"

"What is it, mamma?" asked Neddie, politely, and wondering where he would hide when it came his turn.

"I want you to bring me in some kindling wood for the stove, so I can easily make a fire in the morning to get breakfast," said the bear lady.

"Oh, mamma, I don't want to!" exclaimed Neddie. "I want to play hide and seek some more. It's my turn to hide, and I know a dandy place where they can't find me. Sammie Littletail, the rabbit, has to be it, and he'll never find me."

"Well, my dear little bear boy," spoke Mrs. Stubtail, "I know you like to play, but you must also help me. Bringing in the wood is one of your tasks. So don't make a fuss about it."

"All right, mamma, I won't," said Neddie, eagerly. "Only do I have to bring in the wood right away?"

"It would be better to get it in before dark," said Mrs. Stubtail, "but I don't mind if you wait a little while longer. Only don't forget it,

and don't be too long. It soon gets dark, you know, and you can't see to get me nice sticks of wood. But go on and play a while longer."

Mrs. Stubtail wanted to be kind to Neddie, but she also wished him to feel that he had certain things to do, and must do them.

Well, Neddie went on playing hide and seek, and he hid in the big clothes basket that was in the yard. He pulled a clean sheet from the line over him, and really the basket looked as though it were filled with clothes from the wash.

Of course when Sammie Littletail, the rabbit boy, who was searching for the other animals this time, passed by the basket, he only saw the sheet, and never thought that Neddie was hiding under it. So Sammie didn't find Neddie, though he did all the other animal boys, and such fun as Neddie had when he ran in home free.

"I told you that you couldn't find me!" he said, as he tried to stand on one ear, but he couldn't because his ear bent double. Then Neddie fell down, and he knockled over Peetie Bow Wow and Peetie bumped up against Jimmie Wibblewobble, the duck, and for a time it looked just like an animal circus.

Well, Neddie Stubtail was having so much fun that he forgot all about bringing in the kindling wood for his mamma. Then, all of a sudden it

got dark—so dark that the animal boys couldn't play hide and seek any more—and Neddie remembered the wood.

"Oh, dear!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" asked Charlie Chick, who was also playing the game.

"I forgot all about the wood," spoke Neddie. "You stay and help me carry it in; won't you? I'll give you a honey cake, if you do, Charlie."

"Well, I'd like to very much," said Charlie Chick, "for I am very fond of honey cakes. But my mamma told me to come home just as soon as it got dark. I've got to help shell some yellow corn for breakfast. Good-bye!"

Then Charlie Chick trotted off to his chicken coop, and all the other animals boys went to their homes, though Neddie asked each of them to stay and help him bring in the wood.

But none of them could, for they, too, had little things to do at home.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Neddie. "I've got to bring in the kindling wood all alone. And it's dark! But I suppose it serves me right for letting it go so long. Next time I'll not." And I suppose it did serve Neddie right, though that did not make it any the more pleasant.

So the little bear boy went out to the woodpile. It was so dark he could hardly see, but still he

was brave, and he made up his mind he was not going to ask Uncle Wigwag, or Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, to help him.

"For it's my own fault for not bringing in the wood earlier," thought Neddie.

He hurried all he could, and brought in one pawful, which he put in the wood-box behind the stove. His mamma didn't say anything when Neddie stood there in the kitchen a minute, sort of waiting-like, as though he hoped she would excuse him.

Mamma Stubtail really felt sorry for her little bear cub, but she knew it would be a good lesson to him. And there are more kinds of lessons in this world than you learn from your school books, you know.

So Neddie went out to the woodpile again, and it was darker than ever. The little bear boy piled his paws full of the firesticks and started for the house. It was quite a distance, and before Neddie got there some one stepped up behind him and grabbed him tightly.

"Oh, dear!" cried the little bear boy. "Who is it?"

"It is I! The skillery-scalery alligator!" was the answer, given in a shivery sort of voice. "At last I have you! I have been waiting until it was dark enough for me to carry you off with-

out any one seeing me. Now I've got you. Come along!"

"No, I'm not going!" cried Neddie, and he struggled to get loose. But he couldn't, for the 'gator held him too tightly.

"Oh, help! help!" cried poor Neddie.

"Hush! No more of that!" snarled the skillery alligator, and he held one paw over Neddie's mouth so the little bear boy couldn't call for help.

"Come along!" cried the alligator, and he started to drag Neddie away.

And then the little bear cub thought of something. In his paws were a lot of sharp, jagged sticks of wood. As quickly as a flash Neddie dropped all but one of these sticks of wood. This one he grasped tightly in his paws, and with that stick he gave that bad alligator such a whack on his nose that tears came into his eyes.

"Oh, wow! Trolley cars, and ice cream cones! What happened to me?" cried the alligator. "Did it thunder and lightning?"

"No! I did it with my little stick!" cried Neddie and he gave the 'gator another whack, if you will excuse my saying so. Then the alligator cried "Wow!" again, and more tears came into his eyes, and he could not see through so much salt water, and then Neddie managed

to wiggle loose and run into the house. And the 'gator had too much of a toothache to follow, so the little bear boy got away after all. And the skillery-scalery alligator went to the dentist's. to have his tooth fixed.

After that, Uncle Wigwag helped the little bear boy bring in the rest of the wood, and never again did Neddie let his work go until dark. And on the next page, if the coffee grinder doesn't take a bite out of the gas stove and make it sing in its sleep, I'll tell you about Beckie and her cough medicine.

STORY XX

BECKIE AND HER COUGH MEDICINE

"KER-CHOO! Ker-choo! Ker-choo!" sneezed little Beckie Stubtail, the bear girl, as she sat up in her bed of straw one night. "Ker-choo! A-ker-choo! Boo-hoo!"

"My goodness me sakes alive and some castor oil!" cried Aunt Piffy, the nice old bear lady, waking up from a sound sleep in the next room. "What ever is the matter, Beckie?"

"Oh, dear! I don't know!" cried Beckie, as she rubbed her eyes in the dark. "But I feel so queer! My nose is all stopped up, and I can't breathe and my throat tickles and I'm cold——"

"Oh my goodness!" cried Aunt Piffy, jumping out of bed so quickly that she almost stepped on the pussy cat's tail.

Mrs. Stubtail, the mamma bear, had also heard her little cub girl sneezing and coughing, and Mamma Stubtail jumped up too, and ran to Beckie's room, turning up the night light so she could see what was the matter.

"What is it, Beckie? What has happened?" asked mamma.

"Oh, dear! I'm so miserable," said poor Beckie, crying.

"Oh, no wonder!" remarked Aunt Piffy. "See, she is all uncovered, and she has taken cold. We must put her feet in hot mustard water at once, and send for Dr. Possum. Oh, the dear child is going to be ill!"

"I hope not," said Mamma Stubtail, but she was afraid just the same.

Then such a time as there was with the two lady bears bustling around to look after Beckie. And all through it Papa Stubtail never waked up, for he had worked hard that day, and was a sound sleeper. But Uncle Wigwag, the funny old bear gentleman, did awaken, and, putting on his dressing gown and slippers, he stuck his head in Beckie's room, and asked:

"Is there anything I can do?"

"Yes," said Aunt Piffy. "You might heat some water. We want to give Beckie a hot bath."

"I will," said Uncle Wigwag, and he didn't try to play any tricks at all then, but heated the water at once. And Uncle Wigwag was very fond, too, of playing tricks and jokes, let me tell you.

Well, soon Beckie was nice and warm, and she had soaked her paws in mustard water, and taken some sweet medicine. And all this while Neddie her little bear brother, had not awakened from his sleep.

But Mamma Stubtail and Aunt Piffy were kept very busy until nearly morning looking after Beckie. Finally she did not cough or sneeze so much, and she fell asleep. Everybody was glad.

"When it's morning we'll have Dr. Possum," said Mrs. Stubtail, softly.

Well, morning came after a while, but it always seems to come very slowly when you are awake and waiting for it, especially if some one is ill. And Beckie was quite ill. She seemed to get worse all the while.

When Dr. Possum came, right after breakfast, he felt of Beckie's paw to tell how fast her pulse was beating. Then he made her put out her tongue to see how red it was, and the animal doctor gentleman said.

"Yes, Beckie is a pretty sick little bear girl. But I think I can cure her. She needs some cough medicine."

"Will it be bad, bitter medicine, doctor?" asked Beckie, as she sat up in bed, with a dry-leaf quilt wrapped around her.

"Well, Beckie, I might as well tell you the truth, for you would find it out anyhow as soon as you tasted it," said Dr. Possum. "The cough medicine is going to be very bitter and bad. I will not deceive you. But I can do one thing—I can make it a pretty color."

"Do, please, then," begged Beckie. "But why is it that you doctors can't make medicine that is not bitter?"

"I'll tell you why, Bettie," spoke Dr. Possum. "You see the bad cold or other disease gets inside you and it likes you so well it stays there, and as long as it stays you can't get better. So we give bitter medicines—not to you, but to the bad cold that's inside you.

"And when the cold sees that bad, bitter medicine coming down your dear little red throat, the cold says to itself:

"'Ha! Hum! This is no place for me! I'd better get out!' And out the cold goes, and then you get better. That's what bitter medicines are for."

"I see," said Beckie. "Well, I'll take it."

"And you can make as many faces as you like when you swallow it," said Dr. Possum with a laugh. Then he mixed up some bitter cough medicine for Beckie, but he colored it pink, just

to match the shade of the little bear girl's hair ribbon.

"There, now," said the possum doctor gentleman. "You can make believe it's pink candy syrup, Beckie."

"I'll have to make believe very, very hard to do that," said Beckie, smiling the least little bit.

Well, Dr. Possum went away, and Beckie had her first dose of the bitter cough medicine. It was so bad and sour and puckery that she made a terribly funny face when she took it. It was such a funny, queer face that Neddie, her brother, who was watching her take the medicine, had to laugh. And, as he was drinking a glass of water just at that minute, the water spilled all over him, of course.

"Well, Neddie," said his mamma, "I guess you had better go on to school. This is no place for you."

So Neddie went to school, and Beckie stayed home with her cough and the pink, bitter cough medicine. For some time she felt quite miserable, and then the medicine made her sleepy.

And Aunt Piffy, who was taking care of Beckie, said to herself:

"Well, now, as long as she's quiet, I'll have time to run across the street and get some sugar from Mrs. Wibblewobble, the duck lady. I will

make Beckie a little sugar candy to take after her medicine.

So Aunt Piffy, leaving Beckie asleep, stepped out of the bear cave. And, as it happened, Mrs. Stubtail had gone out, too. She went over to Mrs. Kat's house to see about getting a thimbleful of thread to sew some shoe buttons on Mr. Stubtail's coat. That left Beckie sleeping all alone in the house, for Neddie, her brother, had gone to school, and Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, had gone out hunting after honey, and Uncle Wigwag, the funny bear, was over calling on Grandfather Goosey Gander, the duck gentleman.

And a bad old lion, who used to work in a circus, came along just then. Seeing the door of the bear cave open, as Aunt Piffy had left it when she went out, the lion said:

"Ah, ha! I'm going in here! Perhaps I shall find something good to eat!"

In he went, and he saw Beckie asleep in her bed.

"Ah, ha! A little bear girl!" growled the lion. The very thing for me! I'll take her away with me!"

He was lifting Beckie up in his big paws, and was just walking away with her, when the little bear girl awoke. And she was so frightened

at seeing the lion that she coughed and sneezed and choked something dreadful. Oh, yes, indeed!

"A-ker-choo! Ker-fooz! Ach! Hoch! Pitzel!" sneezed Beckie. "Oh, dear!" she cried.

"Keep quiet!" said the lion, rudely enough. "Some one will hear you!"

"That's what I want," said Beckie. "Oh, please let me alone."

"No! No!" growled the lion. Then Beckie coughed some more, and her throat hurt her, and she saw the bottle of pink, bitter medicine Dr. Possum had left on her table.

"Oh, please let me take some of that pink stuff!" begged Beckie of the lion.

Now, the lion had some good in him, after all, and when he saw how much Beckie was suffering, he handed her the bottle of cough medicine. Beckie took some, and it stopped her cough at once, but she made such a funny face when she swallowed it that the lion cried:

"Ha! That must be fine stuff to have you make such a funny face. I must look into this. Yes, indeed!"

"Would you like some of my cough medicine?" asked Beckie, hoping the lion would take some. She knew what it would do to him.

"Indeed, I will," the lion said; "I'll drink the

whole bottle full of pink stuff, and then you'll see what a queer face I'll make."

So the lion tipped up the bottle of bitter, sour, pink cough medicine and swallowed it all at once. Of course it wasn't meant to be taken that way—not even by a lion—all at once.

And such a face as the lion made! It was seven different kinds of a face at once, and then the lion howled and roared and said, "Oh, dear!" for his throat seemed to be on fire.

And then, without trying to bother Beckie any more, out of the window the lion jumped, to run off to find some ice water, so his throat wouldn't burn from the cough medicine.

Of course Beckie's medicine was all gone, but it did not matter, for her cold was soon better. I don't know whether it was from the medicine she took, or whether the lion scared the cold away.

Anyhow, Beckie got all well, and the lion didn't bother her again for more than a week.

And, if the bag of peanuts doesn't step on the elephant's toe and make him sneeze, I'll tell you next about Neddie and the tooting horn.

STORY XXI

NEDDIE AND THE TOOTING HORN

"MAMMA, can't Beckie come out and play?" asked Neddie, the little bear boy, as he ran home from school one afternoon. "I came home early on purpose. It was such a nice, sunny day that teacher said I might come out before the others, to amuse Beckie."

"That was very kind of you," spoke Mrs. Stubtail, "and I think I will let Beckie out a little while. But you must look after her, and see that she does not stay late, for it gets cold after the sun goes down, and you know she is hardly over her cough yet."

"Oh, I'll be careful of her," said Neddie, and he was so glad he could take out his little sick sister, that he stood up on the end of his short, stubby tail.

That is, Neddie tried to stand on the end of his tail, but the truth of the matter is, my dear little friends, that Neddie was getting to be such a fat, heavy little chap of a bear cub that his tail would not hold him any more.

So over he fell, ker-thump-o! But he landed in a pile of leaves so he was not hurt at all.

"Don't let Beckie try that, Neddie," said Mrs. Stubtail, with a laugh. "She is only just out of a sick bed, you know."

"I won't!" laughed Neddie, as he picked himself up and brushed off the leaves. You know I told you, in the story before this one, how Beckie had to take some pink, bitter medicine for her cough that Dr. Possum gave her. Hold on, I don't mean that Dr. Possum gave her the cough—no, he gave her the medicine to cure it. And a bad lion got in after Beckie, and he swallowed the whole bottle of medicine and that gave him such a conniption fit that he was glad to leave the little girl bear alone.

So while Neddie waited outside the bear-cave, Mrs. Stubtail went inside to get Beckie ready to take a little walk in the woods.

"Oh, it is just lovely to get out again, after being in the house so long!" sighed Beckie, as she walked along with her brother Neddie, holding his paw.

Neddie was as nice as could be, and he walked slowly with his sister who had been ill, taking good care that she did not stumble over a stick or a stone.

On and on they went, and pretty soon, when

Neddie was thinking it was about time to start for home with his sister, all of a sudden they hard a tooting horn in the woods.

"Hark! what's that?" cried Beckie, giving a jump.

"I don't know," answered Neddie, and he looked all around, ready to run in case there should be danger.

"Maybe it's a hunter and his dogs," suggested Beckie. "Oh, Neddie, I'm so frightened!"

"Don't be frightened, Beckie," he said gently. "I'll take care of you. Maybe, after all, it's only the nice trained bear, George, and the professor man who toots on his brass horn."

"Oh, but if it's he maybe he'll want to take us back to the circus barn," went on Beckie. "I wouldn't like that."

"Nor I," said Neddie. "But I don't believe it is. Let's take a look."

So the two bear children looked all around, and then they heard the tooting horn again. And this time they saw who was blowing it. It was a hunter man, and he had his gun and his dog with him.

"Quick! Jump behind this big tree!" cried Neddie, and he helped Beckie to hide herself. They were only just in time, too, for just then the

hunter looked around, and he might have seen the bear children, except for the tree.

Then the hunter blew his horn again, and, not seeing anything to shoot, he whistled to his dog, put his gun over his shoulder and slinging the horn by his side, down the hill he went, leaving Beckie and Neddie alone. And, oh, how happy they were!

"Well, I'm glad that's over," said Beckie, with a long breath. "We won't come to these woods again."

"I guess not," said Neddie. "Let's hurry home."

"What kind of a horn was it that the hunter man had?" asked Beckie, as she and her brother took hold of paws again, and started for home. "It wasn't at all like the one the professor man blew on. His was brass."

"I know it," answered Neddie, "and this one was made of birch bark, rolled up like a cornucopia such as come on Christmas trees. Only those are filled with candy, and this one had nothing but air in it."

"I see," said Beckie. "And can you blow on a birch bark horn, Neddie?"

"I can blow a little bit on that kind of a horn," said Neddie. "But we'd better not stop now to try it. Let's hurry home."

So the two little bear children went on, over hills and dales, and through the woods.

Now, whether they were not careful to take the right path, or whether the hunter and his dog and gun had so scared them that they didn't know what they were doing, I can't begin to say. It might have been one thing, and then, again, on the other hand, it might have been something else. And I don't want to make a mistake.

Anyhow, the first thing Beckie and Neddie realized was that they were lost. They didn't know where they were, nor how to get home. All they knew was that they were in the woods, some distance from home, and night was coming on.

"Oh, dear!" cried Beckie, when she saw that Neddie did not know his way home. "Oh, dear me!"

"Don't worry, sister dear," he said. "I'll take care of you," and he put his paws about her.

"Oh, I know you will," said Beckie, "and you are as kind as you can be; but, still, and with all that, if I stay out after dark my cold may get worse again, and I'll have to take more of that bitter medicine."

"You can't!" exclaimed Neddie. "The bad lion swallowed it all for you!"

"Oh, but Dr. Possum can make plenty more,

and maybe worse than that!" cried Beckie. "Oh, dear! Where is our home? It's lost!"

"No, it's we who are lost," said Neddie, with a laugh. "Our house is just where it always was." And he giggled again. He didn't feel very much like laughing, you know, but he did it to cheer up his little sister. It's a good thing to laugh, sometimes, even when you don't feel like it.

Well, it kept getting darker and darker, and Beckie was more and more frightened, even though Neddie was as jolly as he could be. Finally he said:

"We'll just call for help. Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear, or our papa, or Uncle Wigwag might be roaming through these woods, and they'd hear us and take us home."

"Oh, then, holler as loudly as you can," said Beckie. "Perhaps mamma, or Aunt Piffy, is out looking for us."

So the two little bear children called as loudly as they could. Again and again they shouted, but only the echoes answered them.

"It's of no use!" said Beckie, and she was almost ready to cry, for her cough was hurting her again. Then Neddie thought of something.

"I have it!" he cried. "I'll make a tooting horn out of birch bark, like the one the hunter

man had. I'll blow on the horn, and surely some one will hear that."

"Oh, goodie!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws. Then she felt better.

Neddie with his sharp claws quickly stripped off some white birch bark from a tree. He rolled the bark into a sort of cornucopia, large at one end and small at the other. He put the small end to his mouth.

"Toot! Toot! Toot!" went the little bear boy on the birch bark horn. Again and again he blew it. Finally Beckie said:

"I hear some one coming!"

Surely enough there was a sound in the bushes.

"Come and get us!" cried Neddie.

"I'm coming," said a voice, and then, instead of their papa or uncle bear, out jumped the bad old skillery-scalery alligator.

"Now I have you!" he cried, snapping his teeth.

"Oh, no, you haven't!" said Neddie. And with that he blew such a blast from the tooting horn in the face of the 'gator that the bad creature turned a somersault and a peppersault mixed together and away he ran back to the drug store, where he belonged. Then Neddie blew some more tunes on the tooting horn, and this time his papa, who was searching in the woods, heard

him and came to get his little boy and girl bear.

So Neddie and Beckie weren't lost any more, and soon they were safely home, and I'm glad to say that Beckie's cough got no worse. And they had hot mush for supper with sweet molasses on.

And in the next story, if the lady downstairs doesn't come up and take my typewriter to get her baby asleep with, I'll tell you about Beckie and the hand-organ man.

STORY XXII

BECKIE AND THE HAND-ORGAN MAN

"BECKIE," said Mrs. Stubtail, the lady bear, as she came into the sitting-room in the cave-house where the little cub girl was playing with her rubber doll; "Beckie, I wonder if you are well enough to go to the store for me?"

"Of course I am, mamma," answered Beckie. "My cold and cough is all cured now. I can go to school next week, I think."

"I hope so," said Mrs. Stubtail, "for you have been very ill."

I told you, you know, about how Beckie had to take some very bitter, sour medicine, and how she fooled the bad lion with it.

And, since her illness, Beckie had not been to school. But she was better now, and that's why Mrs. Stubtail thought perhaps the little bear girl could go to school.

"Well, as long as you think you are able to be out," went on the mamma bear, "I'd like you to bring me a cake of yeast. I want to bake some bread.

"I would go to the store for it myself," went on Mrs. Stubtail, "only I have to stay in the house, since Aunt Piffy is visiting over at Mrs. Wibblewobble's duck pond, and I expect Mrs. Bow Wow the dog lady might call this afternoon. That's why I asked you to go for the yeast, Beckie."

"Oh, mamma, I don't in the least mind," said Beckie, politely. "I think the walk will do me good. It is a nice day, though it does look as though it were going to snow. And I'll take my doll, Isabella Trolleycar Jamkitchen, along with me. She needs the air, too."

"Well, wrap up warmly," spoke Mrs. Stubtail, "and don't catch any more cold."

"No, and I won't let the cold catch me!" laughed Beckie, as she looked for her little red jacket, hanging on the hat rack.

So the little bear girl started off through the woods to go to the store for a yeast cake for her mamma.

The store was kept by a nice, kind old pussy-cat lady, and when Beckie got there the pussy-cat was just drinking a saucer of warm milk.

"Would you like some, my dear?" asked she of Beckie.

"Thank you, I would," said the little bear girl, politely.

So before buying her yeast cake, Beckie had some nice, warm milk, and a molasses cookie, which the cat lady storekeeper baked all by her own self.

"Now be careful, and don't lose your change," said the lady cat, as she gave the pennies to Beckie. "And put the yeast cake in your pocket, where it won't fall out."

"I will," answered Beckie.

Off she started for home, with the pennies and the silver-covered yeast cake rattling about in her pocket. Now a yeast cake, as I guess you all know, is something to make a loaf of bread light and fluffy. The yeast makes the bread all full of little holes, so that the butter won't fall off it when you spread it on.

Well, Beckie was going along, thinking how much nicer it was to be well than ill, and she was wondering what the animal girls would say to her when she went back to the school, when, all of a sudden, Beckie heard some one crying behind a clump of bushes.

"My goodness!" cried the little bear girl. "That's a man!"

You see she could tell right away that it was no animal crying.

"Yes, it's a man!" thought Beckie, and she got ready to run as soon as she could see which

way to go, so as not to run into the man. For most men, Beckie knew, would like to carry away a little bear cub like herself.

Then Beckie heard the crying again and a voice said:

"Oh, dear! How sad I am. Poor George has run away and left me!"

"George!" thought Beckie. "Why, that was the name of the nice, tame, trained bear that Neddie and I ran off to travel with some time ago. I wonder if that man can be the Professor who blew on the shiny, brass horn?"

So Beckie peeked around the corner of the bramble briar bush, behind which the crying man was hiding, and she saw that he wasn't the Professor gentleman at all.

He was a hand-organ man, with a nice fur coat, and he was crying as hard as he could cry, that man was.

"I don't think he'd be cruel to me," thought Beckie. "Anyhow, he's in trouble, and maybe I can help him. Besides, hand-organ men most always have monkeys, and if they are kind to the monkeys they'll probably be kind to little bear girls. I'm going to ask him if I can help him."

Just then the hand-organ man cried again, and said:

"Oh, dear! Oh, George, why did you ever run away and leave me?"

Oh, I forgot to tell you that the reason Beckie knew the crying man played a hand-organ was because there was a hand-organ standing up against a tree near him. Only he wasn't playing it just then. You can't very well play a hand-organ and cry at the same time. At least I never saw any one do it, though, of course, it may be done.

"What is the matter, hand-organ man?" asked Beckie, politely, making a little bow, as she stepped in front of him. "Why do you cry, and who is George? Was he a little bear?"

"Oh, no," said the man, who could understand bear talk, and speak it, too. "No, George was not a bear. He was a monkey, and he used to do lots of tricks as I played the music. But he has run away and left me."

Then Beckie noticed that there was no monkey with the hand-organ, as there should have been, by rights.

"So you are crying for George; is that it?" she asked the man who was wiping away his tears on the back of his cap.

"That is just why, little bear girl," he said. "I have no monkey to do funny tricks when I play the music, and, unless I have a monkey, the

people will not give me pennies. Oh, I have no money, I can't get any, and I am so hungry."

"Poor hand-organ man!" exclaimed Beckie. "Maybe I could be a monkey for you."

"You!" exclaimed the man. "Why, you are too big. But I thank you just the same."

"I know I am a little larger than a monkey," said Beckie, "but I can do tricks. I learned them from some circus animals, when my brother Neddie and I ran away with a bear named George. At first I thought you meant the bear George."

"No, my monkey was named George, too," said the hand-organ man. "But let me see you do some tricks."

So Beckie danced around in the woods, and played soldier, as she had seen the bear George do, and she climbed a tall tree and then she stood on her hind paws and begged like a little poodle dog, and the man exclaimed:

"Why, that's just fine! Now we'll have a little music!"

So he played a jolly tune and Beckie did more tricks. Then the man said:

"Will you come with me for a while, little bear girl, and do tricks for the people while I play? In that way I may get some pennies, even if I have no monkey."

"Yes, I will come with you for a little while," said Beckie, "but I can not stay very long, for my mamma expects me home with the yeast cake."

So Beckie went with the hand-organ man, down to the city where he played. And such nice tricks as the little bear girl did! The hand-organ man said she was better than his monkey, and I guess the boys and girls who saw Beckie climb a telegraph pole thought so too. Anyhow, the man got lots of pennies, which Beckie took up in his cap, passing it around in her paws.

Then it was time for her to go home, but the hand-organ man was sorry to have her leave him.

"Maybe I'll help you again some day," said Beckie.

"I hope so," said the man, and he didn't cry any more, for he had many pennies to buy food. And he gave Beckie half of the pennies for her own self. Wasn't he good?

And on the way home a bad old tiger from the circus chased Beckie, but she threw the bright, shining yeast cake at him, and the tiger thought it was a bullet from a bang-bang gun, and he was so frightened for fear he might get shot that he ran off and left Beckie alone.

Then she picked up the yeast cake, which was

only bent sideways a little bit, and got safely home with it, and it made a nice loaf of bread.

And on the next page, if the wallpaper doesn't jump down off the ceiling and go to sleep in the baby's crib, I'll you about Neddie playing the piano.

STORY XXIII

NEDDIE PLAYS THE PIANO

"COME, Neddie!" cried Mamma Stubtail, the lady bear, one day, as she went to the door of the cave-house and looked out in front where Neddie, the little boy bear, was playing football. "It's time to practice your music lesson, Neddie."

"Oh, dear!" cried the little bear boy. "I wish I was a player-piano!"

"What a funny wish!" said Beckie, who was taking her doll, Elizabeth Jane Huckleberrypie, out for a walk.

"Why do you want to be a player-piano, Neddie?"

"Then I wouldn't have to practice my music lesson," said the little bear boy.

However, since his mamma had called him, Neddie started to go in. Then Tommie and Joie Kat, the kitten boys, and Jackie and Peetie Bow Wow, the puppy-dog boys, called to him:

"Where you going, Neddie?"

"I have to practice my music lesson," he answered, and he went into the cave-house, but he didn't feel very happy. He sat down to the piano, and he began to play:

"Tinkle-tinkle tinkle-tink!
Dum-te dum-dum dum-dum doo!
Plinko-plunko smasho-bang!
How I wish that I was through!"

That's the kind of a tune Neddie had to play for his exercise music practice lesson, and really he didn't do it well at all. For you see he was anxious to go back to play football with the boy animals.

And that's often the way it is when real boys and girls have to practice music lessons. I wish it were not so, for there is nothing nicer in this world than music, and in order to play it well you have to practice. And some day, if you take music lessons, you'll be glad that you did run up and down the piano keyboard with your fingers when you had much rather be out having games with your friends. For it is very nice to be able to play tunes.

But Neddie didn't think so as he sat on the piano stool, drumming away, and looking at the clock, every now and then to see when his time

would be up, so that he could go out and play with his animal friends.

Finally the clock struck five and Neddie finished his practice with a bang. It wasn't music at all, but he did not care.

"Hurray!" he cried. "Practice is over. Now I can have some fun!"

Out of doors he rushed and more than ever he wished he were a player-piano, so that all he'd have to do would be to jump up and down with his feet when he wanted music. That is a good way to make nice sounds, too, on the player-piano, and I can play one or two pieces myself, that way. But, oh, how I wish I could play by hand!

However, Neddie's friends were glad to see him come out again. They played football and nearly broke the window in Mrs. Wibblewobble's duck pen, so that she had to run out and call to them:

"Now, boys, you must go right away from here. Play football somewhere else."

So Neddie, the little bear boy, and his friends had to move along and look for a vacant lot where they could kick around their football without breaking any windows.

That night, when Mr. Stubtail, the bear papa, came home, he asked Neddie:

"Did everything go all right in school to-day?"

"Yes, sir," answered Neddie politely.

"And when you came home did you practice your music lesson?"

"Yes, sir," answered Neddie, and he was glad he had not skipped it, as he sometimes did.

"Very good," said Mr. Stubtail. "Then on Saturday afternoon I will take you and Beckie to a nice moving picture show."

"Oh, joy!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws.

"Oh, happiness!" said Neddie, and he was glad again that he had not missed his music practice.

Well, that night, after Neddie had finished his home school-work, he wanted to sit up a little longer to read a fairy story. His mamma let him do this, but when it came time for Neddie to go to bed, he had not finished the story. So he begged:

"Oh, can't I stay up just a little longer, mamma?"

Then, as he had been such a good boy, Mrs. Stubtail said that he might, so Neddie settled down into the deep-cushioned easy chair, and read all about how the pink fairy turned herself into a pumpkin and rolled down hill so the giant couldn't make a Jack-o'-lantern of her.

And then quite a lot of things happened. Mrs.

Kat, the mother of Tommie and Joie and Kittie Kat, came in to call on Mrs. Stubtail. And Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady, came to ask Aunt Piffy what the old lady bear did for dyspepsia when she ate cheese for supper. And Grandfather Goosey Gander came in to play a game of Scotch checkers with Uncle Wigwag, while Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear, went out to look for a cake of ice on which to sleep, for, he always liked things cold, you know.

And there were so many things going on that no one thought anything about Neddie. There he sat in the big chair, reading the fairy story until he fell asleep. Then, as it happened, all the company went home at once and in a hurry, and when Papa and Mamma Stubtail locked up the cave-house, and put the cat down cellar, no one thought that Neddie was asleep in the big chair. His sister Beckie had gone up to bed some time ago, and every one thought Neddie was in bed also.

So upstairs in the cave-house went all the big folks, not knowing that Neddie was in the chair. And there he stayed until it got real late and dark. And, oh, so quiet was it in the house! Why, you could have heard a pin drop, if any one had let one fall.

All of a sudden Neddie awakened. He sat up

with a jump, and looked all around in the dark. Of course he couldn't see anything, for it was all black.

Then, hardly knowing where he was, Neddie rubbed his eyes with his paws, but still he could scarcely see. Then he noticed a little light from the street lamp outside, shining in through the window, and he could tell where he was.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "I'm home, in my own house! I fell asleep in the big chair. Huh! I guess I'd better go up to bed!"

Neddie stretched himself, and was wondering if he could find his room in the dark, without waking every one up, including Mr. Whitewash, who was asleep on a cake of ice, when, all of a sudden, Neddie heard a noise. It was right under the window, near which he had been sleeping, and he listened to a voice, saying:

"Now we'll break in through the back door, and we'll take Neddie and Beckie and carry them off to our den and never let them out again."

"Yes, that's just what we'll do," answered another voice, and then Neddie tiptoed to the window, and looking out he saw two bad old lions that had run away from a circus. They were coming to get Neddie and Beckie.

"Oh, what shall I do?" thought Neddie.

" Those lions can easily break into our house. And if I call out to papa and mamma now the lions will hear me and they'll jump in through the window and get me before I have a chance to run.

" Oh, what can I do? How can I scare those lions away? "

Just then Neddie heard a tiny mousie run up and down on the piano keys, making a little tinkling sound. This made the little bear boy think of something.

" I have it! " he whispered to himself in the darkness. " I'll go in to the piano, and I'll play the loudest bang-bang tune I know. Maybe the lions will think it's thunder and lightning and guns shooting off, and they may be afraid and run away! "

So Neddie stole into the piano room and, all of a sudden, he banged his paws down on the loud keys as hard as he could. Then he played on the tinkle-tinkle keys, and again on the thunder notes. The lions, who were just going to break into the cave-house, heard the noise. They had never heard music in the dark night before, and they thought it was thunder and lightning.

" Oh! wow! " cried one lion, " we're going to be caught in a storm! Come on home to our cave! "

" I'm with you! " growled the other lion, shiver-

ing, and away they ran, as frightened as could be, because Neddie remembered enough of his music lesson to make a thunder sound that he had practiced several times.

"And I'm never going to make a fuss about practice again," he said. "Music is a good thing, after all. It scares lions away."

Of course everybody in the cave-house woke up when Neddie played the piano, and when he told his papa and mamma why he did it, to drive away the lions, they said he had done just right.

Then everything got quiet, and Neddie finished his sleep in bed. And nothing more happened. So, pretty soon, if the trolley car doesn't run off the track and bunk into the dishpan and make a big dent in it, I'll tell you about Neddie and Beckie going to a party.

STORY XXIV

NEDDIE AND BECKIE AT A PARTY

One day, when Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the little boy and girl bear, came home from school, where they had said their lessons, each one getting a good mark for not whispering—one day, as they ran in the house to get a honey cake, they saw two little white envelopes lying on the dining-room table.

"Hello!" exclaimed Neddie, looking at them. "Here's some post-office mail mamma has forgotten to open."

"I'll take it to her," spoke Beckie, as she put her school books on the sideboard; "I think she's in the kitchen. And while I'm out there I'll get the honey cakes."

"Good!" cried Neddie, as he wiggled his little tail. "And while you are about it, get as many honey cakes as you can, Beckie."

"I will," answered the little bear girl. Bears are very fond of sweet cakes, you know, especially if they have honey in them.

But when Beckie took up the tiny envelopes

she gave a little squeal of surprise, just like a baby piggie under a gate, and she said:

"Why, Neddie! These are for us—they are letters, with our names on!"

"Are they?" asked Neddie. "Sure enough!" he cried as he looked. "I wonder who can be writing to us?"

"The best way would be to open them and find out," suggested Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear, as she came up from down cellar, where she had gone to keep the apples from getting lonesome. Oh, Aunt Piffy was the kindest old lady bear you ever heard of. She was even kind to the apples and potatoes, and all things like that.

"Open your letters," she said to Neddie and Beckie, "and then you can tell whom they're from."

Beckie began to tear open her envelope, but Neddie, after looking at his for a moment, said:

"Oh, ho! I know. This is a joke of Uncle Wigwag's! I'm not going to let him fool us!"

Uncle Wigwag, you know, was an old gentleman bear who was always playing tricks, or jokes, on Neddie and Beckie, and sometimes on Aunt Piffy, too.

Just then in came Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear gentleman.

"Has anybody seen my cake of ice?" he cried. "I can't find it. Some one must have my cake of ice!"

You see, being a white Polar bear, from the North Pole, Mr. Whitewash always used to sit on a cake of ice to keep cool, and he often mislaid it, or couldn't find it, just as Grandma Cluck-Cluck, the old lady hen, used to lose her glasses.

"Where is my cake of ice?" asked Mr. Whitewash, as he looked all around the bear cave-house.

"Oh, my goodness me sakes alive and some horseradishmustard!" cried Aunt Piffy. "I think I put your cake of ice under the stove, to have it out of the way while I swept, and by this time——"

"Yes, by this time it must be all melted!" cried Mr. Whitewash, as he rushed out to the kitchen. And, as luck would have it, just then, through the door, came Mrs. Stubtail, the mamma bear, and in her hand she had a plate of honey cakes, that she had just baked. Of course Mr. Whitewash rushed right into her, but he didn't mean to. Down went Mrs. Stubtail, down went the honey cakes—down went Mr. Whitewash, and such a mix-up you never saw in all your life!

But no one was hurt, I'm glad to say, though

some of the honey cakes were broken. But that did not hurt them, and Neddie and Beckie picked them up and their mamma let them eat the pieces.

Then Mr. Whitewash managed to find his cake of ice under the stove. It was not quite all melted, but nearly. However, there was enough left for him to sit on and keep cool, until the ice man came with another cake.

Then when everything was quiet Neddie took up his envelope again, and said:

"Look, Mr. Whitewash, Uncle Wigwag is trying to play another joke on us."

"No, I do not think so," answered the white Polar bear gentleman. "He has not been in the house in some time. He and Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman, are playing a game of hop butterscotch on the duck pond. I think your letters are no joke."

"Then I'm going to open mine!" exclaimed Beckie, and when she had done so and had read the writing inside, she called out:

"Oh, Neddie! It's an invitation to a party! Kittie Kat, the little pussy girl, is giving a party and she's asked me to come to it. Is yours an invitation, too?"

"Why, yes, it is," said Neddie slowly. "I guess I'll go."

"Go? Of course we'll go!" cried Beckie. "I wonder what dress I'll wear?"

"Oh, that's just the way with girls!" cried Neddie. "As soon as they hear of a party they begin thinking of dress."

"Pooh! I guess you boys are just as fussy about wearing a new necktie!" said Beckie, as she waggled her little stubby tail.

Well, to make a long story short, Neddie and Beckie got ready to go to the party Kittie Kat was to give. It took place three nights after the invitations came out, and Neddie and Beckie, the little bear children, each one dressed very nicely, went on and on through the woods and over the fields to the Kat home. It was not very far, and there was a bright moon shining in the sky, so they were not afraid.

And I just wish you could have been to the party, which Kittie Kat gave for all her animal children friends. No, on second thought, perhaps, it is just as well you were not there. The animal children wouldn't know you, and they might have been frightened. But some day I'll take you around myself to call on them, and after that they won't mind you.

Anyhow, everybody whom Beckie and Neddie knew seemed to be at Kittie's party. Her brothers, Tommy and Joie Kat, waited on the

door and let in the guests as they came. Sammie and Susie Littletail, the rabbit children, were there, and Peetie and Jackie Bow Wow, the puppy dog boys, and Lulu and Alice and Jimmie Wibblewobble, the ducks, and oh! everybody.

And such fun as they had! They played all sorts of games, such as little bear in the corner, hide the potato, lose the piano and find the molasses. And whoever found the molasses could have some of the sweet stuff on a spoon. Neddie and Beckie liked this game the best of all.

Then there was another game. Kittie Kat brought in an empty barrel, and in the bottom she put a box of candy.

"Now," said Kittie, "whoever can reach over in and down and get that box of candy may have it. But, mind you, you've got to get it with your paws, you can't use a stick or a hook to pull it up."

Now the barrel was quite a deep one, and though all the animal boys and girls tried, they could not reach down and get the box of candy.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Beckie, "this is just the kind of a trick Uncle Wigwag would play!"

"Well, it's only in fun," said Kittie Kat, with a laugh, "and when you've all tried and can't do

it, I'll turn the barrel upside down, the candy will drop out and we'll all have some."

"Wait! I haven't finished yet!" called Neddie Stubtail. "I think I can claw up that candy!"

So he leaned over the edge of the barrel and stretched his paw down in for the candy. At first he could not get hold of the box. Farther and farther he leaned over the edge, and his hind paws came up off the floor.

"Look out, Neddie! You'll fall in!" cried Beckie.

And that is just what Neddie did. All of a sudden into the barrel he went, head over paws and everything. "Ker-bunko!" went Neddie.

Everybody laughed when he went down inside the barrel, and when he bobbed up again, holding the candy in his paws, the animal children laughed more than ever. For Neddie was all covered over with white. He looked just like Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear gentleman, only smaller.

"Oh, Neddie, what happened to you," asked Beckie," in surprise.

"I know!" exclaimed Kittie Kat. "That barrel had flour in it, and I didn't dust it all out. The white flour is all over Neddie's fur."

And so it was, but no one minded.

"I don't care. I got the candy anyhow," said Neddie as he jumped out of the barrel. Then

he gave all the animal children some of the sweet stuff, and when a few more games were played it was time to go home.

Neddie and Beckie went through the forest, and when they were almost at the bear-cave, Beckie said:

"Some one is following us through the woods. Maybe it's a bad lion."

"Bur-r-r-r-r!" I hope not!" cried Neddie. He turned around to look, and there it was, a bad circus lion. But an instant later the lion roared out:

"Oh, excuse me, Mr. Whitewash, I didn't know it was you!" and then the lion ran away. You see he looked at the white flour still on Neddie's fur, and the bad lion thought he saw the big, strong Polar bear gentleman, while it was really only little Neddie. Then the bear children ran safely home.

So you see it was a good thing Neddie fell into the flour barrel and got all white after all, as it scared away the bad lion. And next, if the horsie doesn't jump out of his picture frame on the wall, and run over my typewriter with the pony cart, I'll tell you about Neddie in the snow-bank.

STORY XXV

NEDDIE IN A SNOWBANK

"MAMMA," said Neddie Stubtail, the little boy bear, as he got up from the supper table one evening, "may I go over to Sammie Littletail's house to-night?"

"What for?" asked Mrs. Stubtail.

"Oh, we're going to play with his magic lantern," answered Neddie. "We're going to show some funny pictures. All the boys are going to be there."

"Oh, I wish I could go," cried Beckie, the little girl bear, as she looked to see if her green hair ribbon had turned pink. But it had not, I am sorry to say.

"Pooh! You wouldn't want to be the only girl there," spoke Neddie.

"Oh, yes, I would," exclaimed Beckie. "I like boys better than I do girls," and she wasn't at all bashful-like as she said that. Some girls are that way, you know.

"Well, maybe I'll take you some other night," said Neddie. "But may I go over this evening, mamma?"

"Well, I guess so," answered the lady bear, slowly. "But first you must study your school lessons."

"Oh, I'll do that," cried Neddie eagerly. "I'll learn my reading lesson and my number work. I haven't got much. I've just got to find out how many apples a man would have left if he bought two peaches for five cents and sold a bushel of potatoes for thirteen musk mellons."

"What a funny thing to want to know," laughed Beckie. "Who asked you that question?"

"I don't know," replied Neddie. "It's in the book, that's all I know, and I've got to find the answer for myself. I'm not sure, but I think it's a dozen honey cakes. Now please don't bother me any more, Beckie, for I'm going to study."

"Oh, I won't bother you," said the little girl bear. "I've got to study my own lessons. And after that I'm going to make a sky-blue-pink dress for my new doll, Lillian Cheesecake Clothes-basket."

Neddie hurried with his studying so that he might go over to the house of Sammie Littletail,

the rabbit boy, and see the magic lantern show.

A magic lantern, you know, is something like a moving picture show, only different. I guess you've seen one, so I don't need to tell you about it.

Well, Neddie finished his home school-work, and I guess he did as you boys and girls may often have done—he skipped the hard parts and only took the easy questions, such as how to spell dog, and cat, and rat, and apple, and cake.

Then Neddie put on his hat and coat, and started to go over to Sammie Littletail's house. It was not a great way there through the woods. The moon was shining brightly, just as it was the night before, when Neddie and Beckie went to Kittie Kat's party, and Neddie fell into the flour barrel, as I had the pleasure of telling you in the story before this one.

When Neddie got to Sammie Littletail's house he saw many of his little animal boy friends there, and Sammie was all ready to start the magic lantern show.

And, oh! what a nice show it was! A white sheet was tacked on the wall, and on that the pictures were shown. There was one picture of some little dogs in a country called Germany, walking around on their hind legs and eating pie with a spoon. Then there was another picture

of a cow blowing her horns to make a nice tune so the grasshoppers could dance.

After that Sammie showed a picture of a big lion, roaring in his loudest voice, and, so as to make it seem more like a lion, Neddie, the little bear boy, growled as loudly as he could, stooping down under the table to hide himself.

And when that picture was shown, and when Neddie growled, Jilly Longtail, the little mousie boy, was so scared that he cried right out loud:

"I want to go home! I want to go home!"

Of course, every one laughed at him, but for all that poor little Jilly was quite frightened.

"Why, it's only a picture," said Neddie, as he crawled out from under the table, where he had been trying to roar like a lion. "Don't cry, Jilly," and he wiped away the tears of the little mousie boy on his soft fur.

Well, after that more pictures were shown, and then Mrs. Littletail, the rabbit lady, brought out some nice sweet cakes for the animal boys, and Susie Littletail, the rabbit girl, who was a sister to Sammie, as I guess you know, helped her mamma pass the cakes around to every one.

Well, everybody had a good time, and when it came the hour for the boys to go home, which was quite early, Sammie looked out of the window and exclaimed:

"Why, it's snowing hard!"

"Snowing lard, did you say?" asked Neddie.

"No, not lard, and not butter either," answered Sammie, with a laugh. "I said it was snowing hard—h-a-r-d—not soft, you know."

"Oh, now I see!" cried Neddie. "Well, I'm glad it's snowing, for we can have some fun, making snow men, and building forts and sliding down hill."

"I'm glad, too!" exclaimed Tommie Kat, the kitten boy, "for it will soon be Christmas, and I always like snow at Christmas."

Everybody else at the magic lantern show said the same thing, and soon they had started for their homes, because it kept snowing harder all the while, and they did not want to get snowed in.

Neddie Stubtail, the little bear boy, hurried along, kicking his paws through the snow, and thinking what fun he would have with his sister Beckie on their way to school next morning.

"I'll get out my sled and pull Beckie," thought Neddie. He would do this, you see, because Beckie could not come to the magic lantern show.

Well, Neddie was walking along, and he was putting out his tongue and letting the snowflakes melt on it, sort of tickling himself like, when, all

of a sudden, Neddie heard a roaring sound, and a voice cried:

"Ah, ha! Now I've got you. You shan't fool me this time by covering yourself with flour and making believe you're a Polar bear. I'm after you!" And out from behind a snowbank rushed the bad old circus lion who had chased Neddie and Beckie the night before, when they were on their way home from the Kat party.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Neddie. "I guess I'd better run!" And run he did, through the snow, as fast as he could. But the lion ran, too, and he was almost catching up to Neddie, when, all at once, the little bear came to the edge of a hill.

He came to it so suddenly that he couldn't stop himself, and the first thing the little bear knew he slid over the top of the hill. Down he fell, right into the middle of a big bank of snow, on the other side.

Now a snowbank isn't hard like the iron bank in which you put your pennies, and so Neddie wasn't hurt the least mite, I'm glad to say. Gracious, if he had fallen on a hard iron bank, I don't know what might have happened. I guess maybe he'd have broken his toothache anyhow. I'm not saying for sure, but maybe.

Anyhow, Neddie fell "ker-flop!" into the soft snow, and the fluffy flakes closed up over his

head, not leaving any hole to show where he had gone in. So that when the bad lion came to the edge of the hill and looked down, expecting to see the little bear boy, he couldn't see him at all, at all. For Neddie was hidden by the kind snowbank.

"My, that's rather queer," said the lion, sort of roaring to himself and scratching his nose with his tail. "Very strange to be sure! I'm positive that bear boy is around here somewhere. I'll just call and make him come out."

So the lion called:

"Hey, you, Neddie Stubtail! Come out of where ever you are and let me bite you!"

But, of course, Neddie was too smart for that. He just stayed hiding under the snowbank, and finally the bad lion went away through the storm, growling to himself and wondering what had happened to Neddie.

But Neddie stayed in the snowbank for some time, and then finally the little bear chap began wondering how he was ever going to get out to go home. For the snowbank was very big.

And then a funny thing happened. Neddie's warm breath melted a hole in the snowbank and the little bear boy could look out just as if he were looking through a window in a snow house. And in the shining moonlight, for it had stopped

snowing, he saw, a little way off, the very cave in which he lived. Then he scratched hard with his paws and breathed hard with his warm breath and soon he was out of the snowbank. A little later he was safe in his own house. And oh my! how glad his mamma was to see him!

So he had quite an adventure, which goes to show that you can never tell what will happen when a lion chases you. And on the next page, if the popcorn doesn't go bang up against the ceiling and knock the gas light down cellar, I'll tell you about Neddie and Beckie helping Uncle Wigwag.

STORY XXVI

HELPING UNCLE WIGWAG

One day, when Neddie and Beckie Stubtail, the little bear children, came home from school, they saw in the dining-room Uncle Wigwag, the funny old gentleman bear, who was always playing jokes. And Uncle Wigwag was laughing and chuckling, and giggling to himself, bobbing up and down, and tickling himself on his ribs to make himself laugh all the harder. And then he'd sit down in a chair and hold his sides with his paws because they ached so from his jollity.

"Why, what in the world can be the matter with Uncle Wigwag?" asked Beckie, dropping her books, and hurrying toward him.

"Maybe he's sick," suggested Neddie. "I guess I'd better run for Dr. Possum."

"Sick! He isn't sick at all!" exclaimed Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear. "He's just up to some of his tricks. If you ever joke with me again that way," she went on, looking at Uncle Wigwag sort of sharp-like, "if ever you do that

again, I'll never give you any maple sugar on your honey cakes."

"Oh, what did he do? Tell us!" cried Neddie and Beckie, while Uncle Wigwag laughed harder than ever.

"Why he came home from the five-and-ten-cent store—I guess it must have been," explained Aunt Piffy, and he gave me a box to open. He asked me if I didn't want a new side hair comb, and of course I did. Well, when I opened the box out popped a green snake. I was so scared that I ran down cellar and hid, and I nearly lost my breath, and could hardly find it again. Oh, dear!" and Aunt Piffy fanned herself with her apron, she was so warm.

"Well," said Uncle Wigwag, and he stopped laughing long enough to talk. "I really didn't say there was a side comb in the box, Aunt Piffy. Besides, it wasn't really a snake, you know," he said, turning to Neddie and Beckie. "It was only a snake made of paper, with a spring inside like a jack-in-the-box."

"Oh, I know," said Neddie. "Where is it? Let me take it, and I'll play a joke on some of the fellows at school."

"Take it!" exclaimed Aunt Piffy. "I don't want to see it again. And mind you!" she said to Uncle Wigwag, shaking her paw at him, "if

PLEASE
SIT
DOWN

you joke with me any more—no maple sugar on your fried eggs for breakfast."

"Oh, I'll be good," said the old bear gentleman.

But it was very hard for Uncle Wigwag to stop playing jokes. A little later that afternoon he gave Beckie what she thought was a candy egg, and when she tried to bite into it, thinking it was nice and sweet, the egg popped open, and a little chicken inside, made of paper and feathers, crowed just like a rooster, and Beckie nearly jumped out of her hair ribbon, she was so surprised.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Uncle Wigwag. "That was a good joke!"

"I don't think so," said Beckie, sort of sorrowful-like.

"Don't you? Well, maybe it wasn't," spoke Uncle Wigwag. "Anyhow, here's a penny for you to buy some real candy." Uncle Wigwag was always that way—first he'd play a joke on you and then he'd do you a kindness. He was quite nice after all.

And a little later Neddie was looking for a pencil to write down some of his home schoolwork on his paper pad.

"Here's a good pencil," said Uncle Wigwag, taking one from his pocket. Neddie didn't think

anything, and started to write with the pencil. But, as soon as he did so, it bounced out of his paw and jumped around on the floor. For inside it was a jumping-jack. It was a trick pencil, you know, and Uncle Wigwag had played another joke.

"Excuse me while I laugh," said the old gentleman bear. And Neddie laughed, too, for he rather liked the trick pencil.

And then Uncle Wigwag played another trick. Oh, but he was full of them that day! wasn't he? I guess he must have been roaming around two or three five-and-ten-cent stores to find those jokes.

The last trick Uncle Wigwag played was on Mr. Whitewash, the white Polar bear gentleman. Mr. Whitewash used to have a cup of tea every afternoon, while he sat down to read in the paper about whether it was going to be cold or hot the next day.

Mr. Whitewash used to sit on a cake of ice, you know, because he liked everything cold, except his tea, and he did not like warm weather at all.

Well, he was sitting there, reading his paper, and sort of not looking what he was doing. He reached out his paw to take his cup of tea, with his eyes still on the paper, and when he picked

up the cup and started to drink from it, there was no tea in it. Instead, Uncle Wigwag had put in some ink, and when Mr. Whitewash, not looking at it, started to drink it, the ink spilled all over his white fur. It made him look like a spotted clown in the circus.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Uncle Wigwag. "That's a fine joke!"

"I don't think so," said Mr. Whitewash. "And you had better look out, or I'll play a joke on you."

Then Uncle Wigwag felt sorry he had done such a thing, and he helped Mr. Whitewash clean the ink off his white fur. Neddie and Beckie helped also. And a little later the Polar bear gentleman said to the two children:

"You just watch and see what a trick I shall play on Uncle Wigwag."

So Neddie and Beckie watched, though they didn't see anything for some time. But toward dark that evening, when Neddie was bringing in his wood to fill the box behind the kitchen stove, he heard some one crying in the fields across the way from the bear cave.

"Help! Help! Oh, help!" called a voice.

"Why, who can that be?" asked Beckie, who was watching Neddie bring in the wood.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered the little bear boy, "but I'm going to see."

"Oh, you'd better not," spoke Beckie. "Maybe it's the bad old lion."

"Yes, and maybe it's Uncle Wiggily, the nice rabbit gentleman. He may be in trouble," went on Neddie. "Come on, it isn't far. We'll go see. We must help Uncle Wiggily, you know."

There was no one else in the bear cave just then to go to the help of whoever was calling, as Mrs. Stubtail and Aunt Piffy had gone over to the house of Mrs. Kat, the kitten children's mamma, to ask about making sugar pie. So Neddie and Beckie had to do whatever they were going to do all by themselves.

They hurried on toward where they heard the voice. It was still calling:

"Help! Help! Oh, will no one help me?"

"Yes, we are coming!" answered Neddie, and then he and Beckie ran around the corner by a stump, and they saw, sitting there, Uncle Wigwag, the old joking bear gentleman himself. He did not seem to be in any trouble, and the bear children wondered what had happened to him.

"Help! Help!" he called.

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Neddie. "If you are in trouble why don't you come away? I see no one hurting you."

"No, you can't see it, but I'm in trouble just the same," said the bear gentleman making a funny face. "I am frozen fast to a cake of ice!"

"Frozen to a cake of ice?" said Beckie in surprise.

"Yes. It's a trick played on me by Mr. Whitewash, but I am not complaining about it. It serves me right for playing so many jokes today, especially the one on him with the ink.

"I was walking along, thinking of a new joke to try, when I saw what I thought was a nice seat here by this old stump. The seat had a blanket over the top, and a sign saying:

'PLEASE SIT DOWN ON ME!'

"Well, of course, I sat down, and before I knew it I was frozen fast. You see there was a cake of ice under the blanket, and I'm sure Mr. Whitewash put it there, just to fool me."

"I guess he did," said Neddie, and he could hardly keep from laughing, for Uncle Wigwag looked so funny, frozen fast.

"Can't you help me?" asked the bear gentleman. "You see Mr. Whitewash can sit on a cake of ice without freezing to it, for he is used to living at the North Pole, but I am not. Oh, dear! I'm

freezing tighter and tighter. I may have to stay here all night."

"Oh, no, we will help you," said Neddie kindly. So he and Beckie blew their warm breath on the cake of ice, and soon it was melted enough so that Uncle Wigwag could pull himself loose. And very glad, indeed, he was to get up. Then along came Mr. Whitewash saying, as he combed his claws through his white fur:

"Well, I see my trick worked after all."

"Yes," spoke Uncle Wigwag, "it did. And it served me right. Now let's all go and have some hot chocolate, for I am chilled through." So they had the hot chocolate in the drug store, and everybody was happy, and Uncle Wigwag didn't play any more tricks until the next time.

And if the cat in our back yard doesn't try to walk across the clothes line and fall off into the ash can, I'll tell you next about Beckie Stubtail and her wax doll.

STORY XXVII

BECKIE AND HER WAX DOLL

Beckie Stubtail, the little girl bear, who lived in the cave-house near the nice woods, had more dolls than any real girl I know of, except maybe the daughter of Santa Claus—that is if he has any children. But, of course, Santa Claus must have children of his own, or else how could he love so many children that belong to other persons—always giving them nice things at Christmas, and all that?

Oh, yes, I know, lots of folks say there isn't any Santa Claus at all, but you and I know differently, don't we? And if those persons don't believe it, I can show them, right on the roof of my house, the very same chimney down which Santa Claus comes every Christmas.

That ought to make them believe; oughtn't it now? Well, I guess yes, and some lollypops besides!

But what I started to say was that Beckie Stubtail, the little girl bear, had more dolls of

different sorts than any real child. Of course a daughter of Santa Claus wouldn't count, for she could go to her papa's big present-bag and take out as many dolls as she wanted—or rocking horses or jumping-jacks or anything else. So I don't mean her.

Really Beckie had the mostest dolls, if you will kindly let me use such a word, which I know isn't just right. Beckie had a rubber doll that would bounce up and down when you dropped her in the bath tub or on the floor. That doll's name was Sallie Ann Kissmequick.

And then there was a rag doll, with shoe buttons sewed in her face for eyes. And the funny part about that doll was that she always kept looking at her feet. I suppose it was on account of the shoe buttons.

"But best of all," said Beckie, when she was talking about her toys to Susie Littletail, the rabbit girl, "best of all, I like my sawdust doll, Matilda Jane Shavingstick. She is just lovely!"

"What funny names your dolls have," said Susie.

"Yes, some of the names were given them by my Uncle Wigwag. He's always playing tricks, and jokes, you know."

"I know!" exclaimed Susie with a laugh, as she remembered how Uncle Wigwag, the funny

old bear gentleman, had played one joke too many a few days before and how he had frozen himself fast to a cake of ice that Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear gentleman, used as an easy chair.

"And I like my clothespin doll, too," went on Beckie, for she did have a doll made of a clothespin, with inky eyes.

"I like my wax doll best of all," said Susie. "My Uncle Wiggily Longears gave her to me last Christmas. Oh, she's such a darling! Her cheeks are so pink and her eyes are so blue, and she can open and shut them, too, and she can say 'Mamma' and 'Papa,' when you push on a spring in her back."

"Oh, I wish I had a wax doll!" exclaimed Beckie, the little girl bear, sort of sad-like. "But I don't s'pose I'll ever get one, even if Christmas is coming."

Now, you boys needn't go away just because you think there's nothing but dolls in this story. I'm going to put in a real scary part pretty soon. In fact, it's coming around the corner of my typewriter now and I'll be up to it in a minute.

Well, Susie, the rabbit girl, and Beckie, the little bear girl, talked a lot more about dolls. I could write down what they said, but I guess you girls know pretty much what it was, anyhow, and as for the boys—well, I'll just say that the two

little animal girls kept on saying such things as, "Oh, she's just too sweet for anything!" "She's a darling!" "And she blinks her eyes so natural!" All doll-talk, you know.

Well, Beckie and Susie walked on through the woods, and pretty soon they came to a place where there was an old hollow stump. In the summer time a nice family of birds lived in it. They were some relation to Dickie Chip-Chip, the sparrow boy, but now all the birds had flown away down South, where it was nice and warm. For it was winter in bear-land, you know.

All the while Beckie Stubtail was wishing and wishing she had a wax doll, with real hair, and then, all of sudden, she looked at the old hollow stump, and, my goodness me sakes alive, and some molasses cookies, she saw a lovely wax doll there.

"Oh, look!" cried Beckie. "What a sweet doll. Whose can she be?"

"Why, she's yours, of course," said Susie with a smile, as she wiggled her long rabbit ears.

"Oh, I only wish she was!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws. "But how do you know?"

"Oh, it's easy enough to tell that," answered Susie. "That doll is yours, Beckie. It must be. You see, I have a wax doll, so I don't need another. You have no wax doll and you want one."

"Indeed I do, very much!" exclaimed Beckie.

"Then she is yours—take her," went on the little rabbit girl. "I'm sure she is meant for you."

"But who could have left her here?" asked Beckie wonderingly.

But Susie did not know this, nor did Beckie. But it would not surprise me the least bit if Santa Claus himself had dropped that doll in the hollow stump. You know he often comes around a few days before Christmas to see how things are getting on and to find out what boys and girls and animal children need. So I think it's safe to say that Santa Claus left that doll in the hollow stump for Beckie.

Anyhow, the little bear girl clasped in her paws the lovely wax doll, and then she and Susie looked at her and made her open and shut her eyes, and they felt of the soft wax in the doll's pink cheeks, and they were both happy, especially Beckie.

"Let's go home!" exclaimed Susie. "I'll get my wax doll and we'll play house."

"All right, we will!" said Beckie.

So she and Susie, the little rabbit girl, started back through the woods, Beckie carrying her new wax doll. Well, they hadn't gone very far before, all of a sudden, out from behind a tree, sprang the bad old skillery-scalery alligator, and

he popped out into the path, in front of Beckie and Susie, and he wound his long double-jointed tail around them so they couldn't move and there he had them fast.

"Ah, ha!" cried the bad old alligator, blinking his fishy eyes, "now I have you both, and a little baby, too."

You see the alligator thought the doll that Beckie carried was a real baby, and honestly it did look like one. Of course the alligator didn't know any better, you see.

"Yes, now I've got you two animal girls, and also the baby," went on the bad creature. "Oh, ho! This is a lucky day for me!" and he blinked his fishy eyes real sassy-like.

"What—what are you going to do with us?" Beckie asked, trying to be brave and not afraid.

"What am I going to do with you?" repeated the alligator. "Why, I am going to carry you off to my cave and there I'll keep you for a year and a day. And after that—ha, hum—let me see. Why, I guess I'll keep you there forever."

"Oh, dear! That will be terrible," cried Susie, as she thought she might never see her little brother Sammie any more, nor Uncle Wiggily, either.

"Please let us go!" cried the little rabbit girl.

"No, I will not!" growled the bad old skillery-scalery alligator.

Then Susie and Beckie tried as hard as they could to get away, but the alligator only wound his double-jointed, stretchy, rubbery tail the more tightly about them. Then he began to drag them off to his dark cave, to keep them forever and a day, and then—and then——

All of a sudden something happened. Beckie felt her new wax doll wiggling in her arms, and the doll seemed to be trying to get away. Beckie held the doll tightly, but the wax creature only wiggled the more.

Then all at once that doll grew up into a great big giant lady, as tall as a tree in the woods, taller and bigger and stronger than the old alligator, and then that wax doll just took her two strong arms, and with them she unwound the alligator's tail from about Beckie and Susie. And then the doll lady cried:

"There you go, you bad creature, and don't let me ever catch you bothering Susie or Beckie again!" And with that the doll lady just tossed the alligator into one peppersault after another over the tree tops, and away he sailed, turning over and over through the air, and if he hasn't stopped he may be sailing yet for all I know, unless he has reached the moon.

Beckie and Susie were so surprised that they did not know what to do, but while they looked the doll lady shrank down to her regular wax size again, and she blinked her eyes and said "Mamma" and "Papa" just like any phonograph doll can do.

"Well, what do you know about that?" cried Beckie. "What a wonderful doll I have, to be sure!"

But that was the only time Beckie's wax doll turned herself into a giant lady, and she wouldn't have done it that time only to save Beckie and Susie from the alligator.

The two little animal girls were very glad indeed to get away from the skillery-scalery alligator, and they hurried home as fast as they could, and played house with the wax doll, and had a lot of fun.

And in the next story, if the baby carriage doesn't fall down stairs and bump the rubber tires off the wheels, for the puppy dog to chew for gum, I'll tell you about Neddie and the lemon pie.

STORY XXVIII

NEDDIE AND THE LEMON PIE

"Ho, Neddie boy!" called Uncle Wigwag, the gentleman bear, to the little boy bear who was coming home from school, swinging his books in a strap that dangled from his paw. "Ho, Neddie boy, your mamma wants you!"

"She does?" asked Neddie. "What for?"

"To go to the store for a bushel of lemons!" said Uncle Wigwag, waltzing around on one paw, and holding the other up in the air like a jumping-jack dancing on top of a frosted cake.

"Oh, now I know you're joking," said Neddie, for Uncle Wigwag was a funny old bear gentleman, always playing tricks.

"Well, I am joking, just the least little bit," admitted Uncle Wigwag, blinking both his eyes slow and careful-like, so as not to get any dust in them. "But really your mamma does want you to go to the store. She told me to tell you just as soon as you came home from school."

"What does she want?" asked Neddie. "I

was going over to Jackie Bow Wow's house to play football with him."

"Your mamma wants you to go to the bakery for a lemon pie," said Uncle Wigwag, scratching his left ear with his right paw, which is not an easy thing to do. "I just said a bushel of lemons for fun, you know. But really I think I'd like a pie with a bushel of lemons in."

"So would I!" exclaimed Neddie. "I love lemon pie. I hope mamma wants me to get a big one, with that funny white of egg stuff and sugar on top."

"That's the very kind I want," said Mrs. Stubtail, the lady bear, coming to the door just then. "Get me a large lemon meringue pie, Neddie. You see we are going to have company to-night, and really I haven't time to bake a pie, and Aunt Piffy is so busy with dusting and sweeping that she hasn't either. And as for asking Uncle Wigwag to make a pie, why I'm afraid he'd play some joke with it—such as putting in sawdust, or filling the top with white cotton batting."

"Yes, I guess maybe I would," said Uncle Wigwag, smiling at himself, which is another hard thing to do. "I will have my joke. But as long as I have told Neddie what you want of him, I suppose I may go over and see Grandfather Goosey Gander now, may I not?" asked the old

bear gentleman, turning a peppersault as easily as a cow can blow her horn.

"Yes, I won't need you around here, as long as I have Neddie to run on my errands," said Mrs. Stubtail. "But don't play too many tricks, Waggy," she said, calling Uncle Wigwag a pet name he sometimes went by. "And be sure to be back here for supper," went on the lady bear.

"Oh, you may be sure I'll not miss that!" exclaimed Uncle Wigwag with a laugh. "I want some of that lemon pie Neddie is going to bring home from the baker's."

So off went Uncle Wigwag to call on Grandfather Goosey Gander.

"Where is your sister Beckie?" asked Mrs. Stubtail, of Neddie, as she gave him the money to get the pie.

"Oh, she went over to Susie Littletail's house, to talk about wax dolls, I guess," spoke Neddie. "She told me to tell you she's be home to supper. I know I'll be here to supper, anyhow," went on Neddie, smacking his lips as he thought of the lemon pie. "Who are the company, mamma?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Silver-tip, a new family of bears who have moved into the cave across the street," answered Mrs. Stubtail: "I want to make them feel at home."

"Do they like lemon pie?" asked Neddie.

"Oh, I guess so," said Mrs. Stubtail.

"Oh, dear!" sighed the little bear cub.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked his mother.

"So many people like lemon pie," he replied. "I'm afraid there won't be enough to go around. There's Uncle Wigwag, and—"

"Oh, don't worry!" laughed Mrs. Stubtail. "You may get the largest lemon pie the baker has."

Then Neddie felt happy, and off he went to the baker's as fast as his paws would take him. Sometimes he ran along on just his hind feet, walking almost like a real boy and like the trained bears you see in the circus. And again Neddie would drop down on his four feet and go along that way for a while, like a little poodle doggie.

It was quite cold and there was some snow on the ground. Not as much as the time Neddie jumped into the big drift, but enough to make some snowballs. Neddie made a few in his paws, tossing them up into the air—the snowballs I mean he tossed, not his paws—and he caught the snowballs as they came down.

Pretty soon Neddie came to the baker's, and he said:

"I want the largest lemon pie you have, if you please."

"All right," said Mr. Peetie Skeezex, the baker, "you shall have it. I have a specially fine large one."

Then he brought out from the oven the loveliest lemon meringue pie Neddie had ever seen. It was almost as large around as a Christmas drum, and on top was a lot of that white fluffy stuff made from eggs, and it was browned just the least little bit, and sprinkled with powdered sugar, and around the edge was some sort of curly-cue stuff like twisted rope, and the pie was as pretty as one picture and part of another one.

"Oh, yum-yum!" cried Neddie when he saw the lemon pie. He could not help it, and he could hardly stop from taking a taste. But the baker knew what hungry bear boys might do to a lemon pie, so Mr. Peetie Skeezex put the lemon pie in a paper and tied it very tight.

"There you are, Neddie," he said to the little bear boy. "There's your pie. Hurry home with it."

"I will," answered Neddie. "We're going to have it for supper. We've got company coming."

"Fine!" said Mr. Skeezex, giving Neddie a sweet cake to keep him from getting too hungry on the way home with the pie. I guess the baker was afraid that maybe Neddie might bite the pie,

just to see if it were real. But if Neddie had a sweet cake of his own to nibble on, this might not happen.

Neddie started for home, carrying the big lemon pie as carefully as the milkman brings in a bottle of cream for the cat, and the little boy bear was about half way to the cave-house, when, all of a sudden, while he was thinking how he could get two pieces of pie for supper, all at once out from behind a mulberry bush jumped an old sea lion.

"Bur-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r!" roared the sea lion, shaking his whiskers fom side to side. "Bur-r-r-r-r!"

"Oh, dear!" cried Neddie, standing still with the lemon pie, he was so frightened. "Oh, dear!"

"Bur-r-r-r-r-r! Wow! Woff! Snuff! Bur-r-r-r!" growled the sea lion. "Don't be afraid, little bear boy."

Well, now, I leave it to you, wouldn't anybody be afraid to be stopped on their way home with a lemon pie for supper—stopped by a sea lion who growled like that? I guess they would. Neddie Stubtail was, anyhow. And by rights, that sea lion ought to have been in the ocean where he belonged. But the ocean was so cold, on account of the ice being in it, that the sea lion had flopped

out. And now he was going to catch Neddie. Oh, dear!

"Don't be afraid," said the sea lion to Neddie. "I am not going to hurt you. What have you there?"

"A lemon pie, if you please, answered Neddie, his teeth chattering.

"Bur-r-r-r-r!" growled the sea lion. "Give it to me. I am very fond of lemon pie. I like it better than lollypops."

"But, if you please," said Neddie, "this pie is for supper. We have company coming."

"That matters not to me," said the sea lion. "Give me that pie!"

And then brave Neddie, thinking he must save the pie, whatever else happened, gave a big jump. Right over the sea lion's head he went, and then how Neddie ran for home!

"Ha! You can't get away like that!" cried the sea lion, and after Neddie he flopped. Well, Neddie ran as fast as he could, and the sea lion flopped as fast as he could, and the bad creature had almost caught the little bear boy when, all at once part of the lemon pie slipped off the bottom crust.

Right through a hole in the bag it went, and into the path it fell, and before the sea lion could stop himself he had slipped on the slippery lemon

stuff of the pie and head over flippers he went, slipping and sliding, until he came to the top of a hill, and he fell over that and down into a bramble briar bush, and he didn't get out for a week and a day.

So Neddie was saved, and he got safely home with the rest of the pie, and only a little bit had fallen off, so there was enough left for him and for Beckie and the company, and even for Uncle Wigwag.

So that's the story of Neddie and the lemon pie and if the iceman doesn't take our refrigerator home with him to keep his little pussy cat warm in, I'll tell you next about Beckie and the cold birdie.

STORY XXIX

BECKIE AND THE COLD BIRDIE

"Oh, see it snow!" exclaimed Neddie Stubtail, the little boy bear, as he looked out of the window of the cave-house. "Look, Beckie!"

"I can't, Neddie, dear," said the little girl bear. "I am making a new dress for my wax doll, Clarabelle Sarahjane Peartree, and if I look up I may drop a stitch or two."

"Oh, if you drop them I'll pick them up," said Neddie most politely.

Beckie laughed.

"You don't understand," she said. "When you are sewing and drop a stitch it means you let it slip out of the cloth. It doesn't drop on the floor."

"I don't understand," said Neddie; "I admit that. But anyhow it's snowing, and I'm going out and have some fun."

"I will come, too, as soon as I get this doll's dress done," answered Beckie. "But I have to put some frills down the middle and some plaits

up the side. Then around one edge there is to go some lace, and on the other some insertion and——"

"That's enough," cried Neddie. "I give up! I'm going out and make a snowball, and there won't be any lace on it, nor any tucks, either."

"Oh, you boys!" said Beckie with a sigh, as she threaded her needle with a fine piece of corn silk that she was using to sew her doll's dress.

So Neddie went out to play in the snow, and while he was hopping about, making snowballs and throwing them up in the air to watch them come down, and now and then rolling over and over in the snow to make himself look white like Mr. Whitewash, the polar bear—while Neddie was doing this, his sister Beckie was sewing her doll's dress.

Pretty soon she had it nearly finished, so she laid it aside, and put her needle safely away where Uncle Wigwag or Aunt Piffy, the fat old lady bear, would not sit on it by mistake, and then Beckie went out to play with her brother Neddie.

The two bear children had lots of fun in the snow, and in a little while Neddie said:

"Let's go over in the woods, Beckie. Maybe we'll find a lemon pie or a pollylop, or something like that."

"What's a pollylop?" asked Beckie, as she caught a snowflake on the end of her tongue, just as the clown in the circus catches a little piggie by his tail. "I never heard of a pollylop, Neddie."

"Why," said the little bear boy, "a pollylop is just like a lollypop only different. You see a lollypop is a stick with a lump of candy on one end."

"Oh, yes, I know that," answered Beckie.

"And a pollylop," went on Neddie, "is a lump of candy, with a stick on one end."

"Oh, I see what you mean!" exclaimed Beckie with a laugh. "One is upside down and the other——"

"The other is downside up," finished her brother, as he turned a peppersault into a bank of snow, and came out on the other side with a feather sticking in his ear.

"Oh, look at that!" exclaimed Beckie. "Where did you get that feather, Neddie?"

"Why, I don't know," he answered, scratching his left paw with his right ear. "I guess it must have come out of the snowbank."

"Feathers don't grow in snowbanks, Neddie," spoke Beckie.

"No more they do," he answered, taking this

one from his ear and looking at it. "I guess this feather must be off a chicken or a turkey, Beckie."

"No, it isn't large enough for a chicken's or a turkey's feather," said Beckie. "It must be from a little bird. But what would a bird be doing in a snowbank?"

And just then the two little bear children heard a voice crying:

"Oh, dear! How cold I am! Oh, I am almost frozen!"

"Oh, the poor thing!" exclaimed Beckie. "That's a poor little birdie in the snowbank, Neddie. You must get him out and we'll warm him."

"How?" asked the little bear boy. "How can you warm him?"

"Oh, I'll find a way," said Beckie.

"All right. Then I'll dive into the snowbank again," said Neddie. And into the snow he went, scattering it carefully about with his paws until, down near the bottom, on the ground, covered with the white flakes, and almost frozen, was a poor little birdie.

"Oh, the dear little thing!" cried Beckie, as Neddie brought out the birdie in his paws, holding it carefully so as not to squeeze it.

"Cheep! Cheep!" went the cold little birdie. That was all it could say.

"Quick, Neddie!" exclaimed Beckie. "You run home and get me some nice warm milk in a bottle. Aunt Piffy will heat it for you. Bring it back here to me, and some bread crumbs, too, I'll feed the little birdie."

"But why don't you bring it home with you?" Neddie wanted to know.

"Because I don't want to carry it through the cold air," answered Beckie. "I'm going to warm the birdie in my fur while you are gone after the milk."

So Neddie ran back home to the cave-house, and Beckie sat down on a stump that stuck up above the snow, and in her warm fur Beckie cuddled the cold birdie, holding her paws over it to keep off the frosty north wind.

"Cheep! cheep!" went the small birdie, and soon it was nice and warm and could flutter its wings a little.

"Do you feel better now?" asked Beckie.

"Oh, much better," answered the fluttering creature. "Thank you so much for warming me."

"But how did you happen to get in the snow-bank?" asked Beckie.

"It was this way," explained the bird. "Yesterday all my friends and brothers and sisters flew away down South, where it is warm. But I stayed to have a game of tag with Lulu Wibble-wobble, the duck girl, and I was left behind. Then it got colder and colder, and I could not fly. I fell into the snow and there I stayed until you came to get me out. I can never thank you enough."

"Pray do not think of that," said Beckie most politely. "I am glad we could save you. I suppose it was your feather that stuck in Neddie's ear when he took a peppersault dive through the snow."

"Yes," said the birdie, "it was a loose one from my tail. And it is a good thing it came off, otherwise you would never have known I was here."

"Very true," answered Beckie. Then she warmed the poor, cold little birdie some more in her fur, and wondered when Neddie would be back with the hot milk and the bread crumbs.

All of a sudden, as Beckie was sitting there on the stump, warming the birdie, out from behind an old apple tree came the biggest fox Beckie had ever seen. He was much larger than the little bear girl. In fact, he must have been the grandfather of all the foxes.

"Wuff! Wuff! Wuff!" barked the fox. "I can see where my Christmas dinner is coming from."

"From where?" asked Beckie, as bravely as she could, though really she was much frightened.

"From you and that bird," answered the bad fox. "I am going to carry you both off to my den, and what a Christmas dinner I will have!"

Well, he was just going to jump and grab Beckie, when the little birdie that wasn't cold any more, but nice and warm, thanks to Beckie's fur —that little bird just flew right into the face of that fox, and with its sharp beak the bird picked the fox on the end of his nose as hard as anything.

"Oh, wow!" cried the fox. "I guess I have made a mistake! I don't want a Christmas dinner off you at all."

"I guess you don't!" chirped the birdie, pecking him on the nose again, and the fox ran away, taking his bushy tail with him, and Beckie and the birdie were safe. Then Beckie warmed the birdie some more in her fur, and pretty soon along came Neddie with the hot milk and bread crumbs, and the birdie ate as much as it wanted.

Then Beckie and Neddie took the birdie home with them to keep it in the warm cave until summer should come again; and everybody was

happy except the fox with the sore nose, and it served him right. And in the next story, if the dinner plate doesn't get hungry and bite a piece out of the salt dish, I'll tell you about Neddie helping Santa Claus.

STORY XXX

NEDDIE HELPS SANTA CLAUS

"ONLY three days more until Christmas! Aren't you glad, Neddie?" asked Beckie Stubtail, the little girl bear, one morning as she jumped out of her bed in the clean straw of the cave-house where she lived, and ran to the door of her brother's room. "Aren't you just glad, Neddie?"

"Glad? Well, I guess I am!" answered Neddie, as he tickled himself with a clothespin to make himself laugh. "I don't even want to go to school to-day, I'm so happy."

"Oh, but I s'pose we do have to go," spoke Beckie. "But maybe we'll get out early."

Just then from the kitchen came a call:

"Hurry, Neddie—Beckie—breakfast is ready! Come and get your griddle cakes with honey on!"

Then Beckie and Neddie, the little bear children, hurried downstairs. Soon they were eating their breakfast. Their papa, Mr. Stubtail, the

old bear gentleman, had had his breakfast some time ago and gone to work. Uncle Wigwag, the gentleman bear, who was always playing tricks and cracking jokes, as a squirrel cracks nuts, was sitting in a corner, trying to think of something new to do to make Aunt Piffy, the fat lady bear, laugh.

Mr. Whitewash, the Polar bear gentleman, was out in the yard, looking for a fresh cake of ice to sit on while he read the morning paper.

Pretty soon Neddie and Beckie started for their classes. They had on their fur coats, for it was rather cold, you see. And in a little while, when the bear children were almost at school, and had met Tommie and Joie and Kat, the kitten children, in their red mittens and rubber boots, it began to snow.

"Oh, how nice!" cried Beckie, jumping about.

"It's just fine!" exclaimed Neddie. "I always like it to snow around Christmas, for I'm going to get a new sled."

"And I'm going to have a pair of skates," said Tommie Kat. "At least I asked Santa Claus for them, and I hope he brings them, and also some ice, so I can use them."

"Mr. Whitewash will lend you his cake of ice to skate on, if the pond doesn't freeze," said Neddie.

And then the school bell rang, and the animal children had to hurry on, so they would not be late.

Such fun as they had in school that day! It was so near Christmas that the professor-teacher was not very strict, and when the children missed their lessons he gave them another chance.

And the Professor let Beckie draw a picture of Santa Claus on the blackboard, with a red cap, and fur on the coat and a big pack on his back—I mean Santa Claus had all these things on, though of course the blackboard had also, after Beckie got through drawing.

Well, when school was out, Neddie and Beckie ran home with the rest of the animal children, but, all of a sudden, as the little bear boy came to the old hollow stump, where Bully, the frog, used to give jumping lessons in summer, Neddie happened to think that he had left his reading book in school.

"I'll run back and get it," he said. "You go on, Beckie, and I'll soon catch up to you."

But Neddie Stubtail didn't come back as soon as he thought he would, for when he got to the school he found that a little mouse boy had taken the reading book down a rat hole to look at the pictures. And by the time Neddie got his book back it was quite late, and growing dark.

"But I'm not afraid," said Neddie as he hurried on toward home, with the book under his paw. On and on he went, through the wood. It became darker and darker. Neddie began to whistle, so he could not hear any rustling in the bushes. For when the bushes rustled he imagined it might be the skillery-scalery alligator, or maybe a bad wolf after him.

But nothing like that took place, and soon Neddie was almost home. Then all of a sudden something did happen. Just as he was passing under a big oak tree, with the brown leaves on it shaking in the wind, the little bear boy heard a buzzing sound, and then a crash and a bang, and a rattle, and some one cried:

"Oh, dear! Now I have gone and done it! Oh, my, yes! and some reindeer-lollypops besides! Oh, what am I going to do now? And not half my work done!"

Neddie crouched down under the bushes. He knew well enough that something had happened up in the oak tree. What it was he could not tell.

"But if it's a gaint, or a bad elephant or a flying eagle trying to get me, they shan't!" exclaimed Neddie.

Then he heard the voice crying again:

"Help! Help! Is there anybody around to help me? I'm stuck in the tree?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Neddie to himself. "He's only saying that to fool me. I believe that's the skillery-scalery alligator sailing around in a balloon, looking for me. But he shan't find me. I'll hide here until he goes away."

So Neddie got farther under the bush, and then the voice cried again:

"Help! Help! Please help me!"

Then some bells jingled, and Neddie heard a song that went something like this:

"Won't you please come to help me.
I am caught fast in a tree.
Christmas time will soon be here,
But I'll sure be late this year,
Unless some one comes quickly,
And gets me loose from out this tree."

Hearing that nice song Neddie wasn't afraid any more. He opened his ears as wide as he could and listened. He opened his eyes as wide as he could and looked up. Then he saw a strange sight.

Caught fast in the tree was an airship—you know what they are—a sort of flying balloon, like a toy circus one, only larger. And in the air-

ship was a nice old gentleman, with a red coat and long white whiskers; and beside him in the airship was a big bag just filled to the top with sleds and dolls and rocking horses and cradles, and steam engines and toy motor boats, and skates and jumping-jacks, and, oh! I couldn't begin to tell you what was in it. Neddie knew right away who was in trouble.

"You're Santa Claus, aren't you?" he asked, as he came out from under the bush.

"That's who I am," answered the old gentleman. "I was flying down here from the North Pole in my airship, when I got caught in the tree. I'm stuck fast and I can't get out, and I don't know what to do. Can you find some one to help me?"

"I will help you myself," said Neddie bravely and kindly. Then, laying down his school books, he climbed the tree sticking in the bark his sharp claws as he had learned to do from George, the tame trained bear, who went around with the Professor.

Soon Neddie was at the top of the tree. Then he broke off the branches that held fast Santa's airship, and dear old St. Nicholas could travel on again, with his bag of good things for Christmas.

Off through the air sailed Santa Claus, and

as Neddie climbed down the tree, after having helped the nice old gentleman, a voice called.

" I'll see you soon again, Neddie. But don't tell anybody you saw me for it's a secret."

" I won't, said Neddie, and he didn't. Then the little bear boy hurried on home, and he had honey cakes for supper, and he never said a word about Santa Claus. And on the next page, if the umbrella doesn't climb up the hat tree and pick off all the breakfast oranges, I'll tell you about Neddie and Beckie in the chimney.

STORY XXXI

NEDDIE AND BECKIE IN THE CHIMNEY

"NEDDIE, what makes you act so queerly?" asked Beckie Stubtail, the little bear, one morning when she and her brother were on their way to school.

"Queer! Do I act queer?" asked Neddie, as he turned around to see if any snowballs were growing on the end of his tail. None were, I'm glad to say.

"Queer! I really think you do act strange," said Beckie, as politely as she could, while eating a bun Aunt Piffy had given her.

"What do I do that's queer?" asked Neddie, curious-like.

"Why, you go around looking up in the air all the while, and listening, and then looking up again. I should think you would get a stiff neck," said Beckie. "Why do you do it, Neddie?"

"Oh, that's nothing," said Neddie, sort of

confused-like. "I—er—I guess I'm looking up to see if it's going to snow any more for Christmas."

"Neddie Stubtail!" exclaimed Beckie, shaking her paw at him. "That isn't it at all? You're looking for somthing in the air and I know it. And, besides, you talked in your sleep last night!"

"Did I?" asked Neddie, sort of anxious-like. "What did I say, Beckie?"

"Well, I couldn't understand it all. But it was something about a tree, and getting caught in it, and then you hollered out: "I won't tell, Sandy!' That's what you talked."

"Did I say Sandy?" asked Neddie.

"Well, it sounded like that," answered Beckie. "But I won't be sure." Then she looked at her brother. Neddie was all sort of red back of his ears, and his little stubby tail was going wiggle-waggle-wog. Then Beckie suspected something.

"Neddie Stubtail!" she cried. "I believe you know something about Santa Claus! That's it! It was Santa—not Sandy. Oh! Neddie, do you—really? Tell me, please! I won't tell. Come on, do, it's so near Christmas!"

Beckie took hold of Neddie's paw and kissed him on the nose.

"Aw, quit!" he cried. "I'm not a girl!"

"I know, Neddie, dear," said Beckie softly. "But I love you!"

"Huh! Yes! I guess you want me to tell you the secret, don't you?" he asked, and really Neddie did not speak as politely as he might have done. But he did not mean to be unkind.

"Oh, a secret!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws. "Do tell me, Neddie, dear."

"I promised not to," said the little boy bear, looking at his toes.

"Oh, if you will," said Beckie, "I've got a honey cake, and I'll give it to you. Do tell me!"

"Well," said Neddie, slowly, as he ate the cake his sister gave him, "It happened last night. I promised not to tell, but then you're my sister and it's almost Christmas, anyhow. I guess he won't care."

And then, because he loved his little sister bear, Neddie told all about having helped Santa Claus, who got caught in the tree top with his airship, as I told you in the story before this one.

"Oh, how perfectly lovely!" cried Beckie, clapping her paws. "Neddie, if I had another honey cake I'd give it to you. Just to think! You really saw Santa Claus!"

"But it's a secret!" said Neddie, quickly.

"Of course—I know," said Beckie, sticking

up her nose just the little tiniest bit. "I won't tell a single soul."

And then they were at school. They studied their lessons and then, as it was recess, all the animal children went out in the yard to play. And, of course, Beckie had to go and tell that she had a secret.

And, of course, all the girls wanted to know what the secret was. And, of course, Beckie said she couldn't tell, but the girls, like Alice and Lule Wibblewobble, the ducks, and Kittie Kat, and Brighteyes, the guinea pig girl, all begged and teased, and well——

"Now promise, cross your heart and twist your paws you'll never, never tell if I tell you," asked Beckie.

"Oh, we promise," said all the animal girls.

Well, you can easily guess what happened. Beckie told how her brother Neddie had helped Santa Claus out of the tree in his airship. And, of course, all the girls promised not to even whisper it. And then, somehow, all the boys had heard of what happened to Neddie. And, in a short time, everybody in the school knew all about the little boy bear having seen Santa Claus.

"Well, it's very queer!" exclaimed Beckie when Neddie spoke to her about it. "I only

just told a few girls—only a very few, and they all promised not to tell!"

"Huh!" exclaimed Neddie. And then, as he saw that his little sister felt badly, he added: "Never mind, Beckie. You didn't mean to, and I guess Santa Claus won't care, anyhow."

And Neddie let Beckie kiss him again, which was very nice of him, I think.

Then, when recess was almost over, Jackie Bow Bow, the puppy dog boy, said:

"Pooh! I don't believe Santa Claus comes down the chimney the way they say he does."

"You don't believe that?" cried Neddie Stubtail, surprised-like.

"No, I don't," said Jackie. "Maybe he has an airship, for you saw that, but nobody ever saw him come down the chimney."

"The idea!" cried Beckie. "What a funny boy! Of course he comes down the chimney."

"How can he with a pack on his back? Answer me that!" cried Jackie. Neddie and Beckie looked at one another. They both thought of the same thing. Then Neddie said:

"Of course Santa Claus comes down the chimney. What if he is big? I'm bigger than Sammy Littletail, the rabbit, and I can go down a chimney."

"So can I!" cried Beckie.

"And we'll do it, too!" added Neddie. "We have a few minutes of recess yet. Beckie and I will go down the school chimney to show them all that Santa Claus can do the same thing."

Then, while all the other animal children looked on in wonder, Beckie and Neddie scrambled up on the roof of the schoolhouse. They could easily do this as there was a tree growing near it. Then Neddie got in the chimney first. It was a large, wide one.

"You'll get all black soot," said Beckie.

"Never mind, it will all wash off," spoke Neddie. "Come on in, Beckie. There's lots of room."

So Beckie got in the chimney, too. Just then the school bell rang. Recess was over. All the animal children had to run in.

"Oh, you'll get a bad mark!" they cried to Neddie and Beckie. "You'll be late!"

"Hurry up! Slide down the chimney and go to school that way!" cried Beckie to Neddie.

"I can't! I'm stuck fast!" he said.

"I'll give you a push!" she cried. And she did. She pushed so hard that both she and Neddie fell right on down through the hole in the chimney, into the fireplace in the school room. But, luckily, there was no fire on the hearth, so they were not burned. Which shows

you that Santa Claus can come down a chimney, and which also shows you that you should not have a fire in the grate on Christmas eve.

Well, of course, Neddie and Beckie coming down the chimney made quite some excitement in the school, but all the animal children laughed, and the professor-teacher laughed, too, and then, as it was so near Christmas, he said there would be no more lessons that day. So Neddie and Beckie, having proved that Santa Claus could come down a chimney, went home to wash off the soot.

What's that? How does Santa Claus get the black soot off him when he comes down a chimney? Why, he always has a whiskbroom with him, you know, and every time he comes down a chimney he brushes himself off. See?

And now we have come to the end of this book, for you can easily tell, by looking, that there isn't room for another story in it.

I'll just say, though, that Neddie and Beckie had the finest Christmas that ever you can imagine. And such presents as they received! And the candy and nuts and oranges and honey cakes—Oh, my! It makes me hungry just to write about it.

And the two little bear children, and their papa and mamma, and Aunt Piffy, the fat bear,

and Uncle Wigwag, and Mr. Whitewash lived happily for ever after—for many years after. And every time he got a chance Uncle Wigwag would play a joke. And Mr. Whitewash would always sit on a cake of ice when he could find one.

But if I can't get any more stories in this book, I can put them in another. And I will. That book will be called "Bully and Bawly No-Tail," and they will be stories about the two little frog boys, who lived in a pond, and could swim as good as a gold fish. They had no tails, except when they were baby tadpoles, but those tails soon fell off. So their names were "No-Tail" you see, just as Buddy and Brighteyes, the guinea pigs, had no tail.

So I'll say good-bye now, for a little while, as I have to write the new book for you.

THE END

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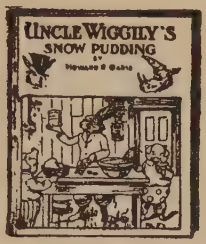

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